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["I WAS UNDER A GREAT MISTAKE," SAID GUY, "I HAVE WRONGED YOU CRUELLY IN MY THOUGHTS."]

## NAMELESS.

### CHAPTER XIV.

It seemed to Lillian, when Guy Ainslie had left her, that the bitterness of death itself was at her heart.

He had been so nobly generous to her. She honoured him as the ideal of all that was good and true, and he had turned against her.

Through all her fears of Sir Ronald she had clung to the hope that Mr. Ainslie would defend her—that he would not utterly desert her however he must condemn her.

An hour passed.

Lillian went upstairs and bathed her throbbing brow with fresh cold water. She felt refreshed, and went back to the school-room with a pretty trifle of fancy-work in her hand. A servant met her on the threshold. My lady was asking for her; would she go at once to the drawing-room?

A little surprised, since Lady Daoces rarely evinced any desire for her society, Lillian obeyed. She found her employer seated in

her own peculiar easy-chair. Her mouth was hard and set; there was a cold, cruel sparkle in her eyes.

Lillian's heart failed as she noticed it. Full well she knew that Vivian had never liked her—that her mercy could be very cruel.

"I have sent for you, Miss—Green," with a very perceptible pause before the latter word—began she lady, in her clear, ringing voice, "to tell you that a train leaves Chepstow at two o'clock. I have ordered the dog-cart in an hour's time, when I hope you will be ready to leave the Castle."

Lillian's blue eyes fixed themselves on Vivian's with a piteous entreaty.

Oh, what a difference in the fate of these two women! Both were young—neither had reached the age of twenty—and both had more than a common share of beauty; but here all resemblance ceased.

Lillian was alone and desolate—poor and friendless. Vivian was a good man's honoured wife; wealthy and respected—courted and admired.

"I do not understand!" said Lillian, faintly.

"How have I been so unfortunate as to displease you?"

"You have deceived me from the first minute of entering my house!"

No answer.

"Can you deny it? You were the affianced wife of a gentleman of high family."

"You mean Sir Ronald Trevlyn?"

"I do. When he discovered the shameful fraud practised on him—when he learned a nameless outcast had been represented to him as Miss Earl—though the blow was a cruel one, he resolved to do his duty. He judged you were to be pitied; he offered to marry you."

Lillian's hands were clasped; never before had she quite realized how black a list of crimes could be laid to her charge.

"You agreed—you sent him away accepting his sacrifice! But you had heard a rumour of his entanglements; you were playing for a high stake. You allowed everybody to believe you dead! Under a false name you obtained the sympathy of my cousin—Miss Ainslie—and entered my house!"

"Lady Daoces," said the governess, with a



strange, sad dignity, "I own that I came here under an assumed name, but I have no other sin against you to reproach myself with, I have a faithfully done my duty."

"Your duty!" scornfully. "Was it your duty to flirt with every guest who came here—to play with the heart of a generous gentleman like Mr. Darby? To strive to seduce Sir Ronald from his allegiance to Miss Cash?—to even attempt to poison the minds of Sir John and his children against myself? If all this was your duty, you have done it faithfully!"

"Indeed—indeed, I am innocent!" cried the poor girl. "Lady Dacres, have pity on me! I have no home—no friends! Let me stay with your little step-children. I will promise you never to leave the schoolroom—never to converse with any of your guests, if only you will let me stay!"

In her agitation she had grasped Lady Dacres' dress with her thin white hand. My lady drew it indignantly away.

"I am quite reached."

"Have pity!" pleaded Lillian. "I am so young—so friendless! Lady Dacres, you are motherless like me! For your dead mother's sake, have mercy!"

"No!"

Once more Lillian tried to move her.

"Think of the disgrace that must fall upon me if you dismiss me thus!"

"You should have thought of all that before," returned my lady.

"Who will take me into their family when they hear of how you sent me away?"

"No one of common sense. But you need not despair; you are quite sufficiently conscious of your own attractions to turn them to good account. There are plenty of men in the world foolish enough to forgive anything for the sake of a pretty baby-face."

She put a little heap of sovereigns on the table—the quarter's salary not yet due. Lillian took it sadly; then, without a word, she went out from the presence of my Lady Dacres.

Two girls; one had broken her pledged troth, and well-nigh blighted her lover's life. She had cast home, faith, and duty to the winds, and she was the darling of Belgrave, the favourite of the county. The other had done nothing save conceal a painful episode of her own life—nothing in the world, and her reward was to be expelled like a thief and a felon!

Lillian went upstairs and began her simple preparations, the maid who usually waited on her assisting; the girl's eyes were red, for she loved the young governess dearly.

"You will give my love to the children," said Lillian, with a choked sob. "Oh, how I should have liked to say good-bye to them!"

"I'll remember, miss," said the maid, warmly. "I only wish Sir John and my lady had stayed up in London. We were very happy without them."

The two o'clock train came rattling into Chapetow station, and Lillian took her place in a second-class carriage. She would gladly have travelled third, only that the train was not intended for economical passengers, and so the cheapest class of carriage was not there. She felt as the engine tore them rapidly onward that another page in her chequered life was over.

There was only one other occupant of the carriage, a girl who might have been five or six years Lillian's senior; she was not beautiful, or even pretty, but there was a strange, nameless charm about her face; and poor, sorrowful Lillian thought she would have given anything to have had her for a friend.

"I am quite sure you are in trouble," said Mary Grant at last, bending forward on a sudden impulse, and taking Lillian's hand, "will you tell me if I can help you?"

The first words unlocked the flood-gates of Lillian's tears; they streamed down her face as she answered no one could help her.

"You are going to London?"

"Yes."

"To friends?"

"I have no friends; I am alone in the world. I was governess at Lady Dacres, and she has sent me away!"

A light broke upon the other's face.

"I used to know Lady Dacres very well before her marriage. I don't think your failing to please her means quite that you will never please anyone. She is very beautiful, but she is capricious!"

Lillian's eyes endorsed this.

"I never meant to vex her," she said, eagerly. "I did my best, indeed I did!"

"And you are Lillian Green. I have often heard of you."

"Have you really?"

"Yes. Can't you guess from whom?"

"I have no idea."

"From my own brother. Archie is very dear to me; and I know he would like us two to be friends. Yes," as the blushes deepened on Lillian's face, "I know that you have refused him—that you have said you can never be his wife; but, for all that, I should like to help you for his sake."

"He was so kind to me!" sobbed Lillian. "Oh, Miss Darby, I wish I had never been born; I bring nothing but trouble to everyone!"

"Hush! you must not say that; and I am not Miss Darby. My name is Grant, and I have been married several years. I am going home now to my little children, and I think you had better come with me. Yes," as Lillian's lips moved, "I do, indeed; you are too young and pretty to be alone in London. Never mind telling me why Lady Dacres sent you away. I know a little of her; and I think it would take a great deal to make me believe evil of the girl my brother loves."

Lillian clung to her in grateful gladness; at the time when she had felt most desolate help had come.

Mrs. Grant chartered a cab at Paddington station, and they drove quickly to a small, cheerful home in Kensington. Little children stood watching at the windows, and before the travellers could alight, little feet were clattering in the hall, and eager voices called "Mamma."

Mrs. Grant kissed them fondly; but with a half sigh, as though some other welcome than theirs was needed to complete her joy, and she asked the servant, humbly,—

"Is the Indian mail in?"

"No, ma'am."

The sweet face looked disappointed; but she showed Lillian to a pretty spare room without a word of regret; and it was only from the little girl who elected to stay with Miss Green that the news came.

"Papa was out in India; he had been gone a long time; but oh, he was coming back soon!"

"And what are you going to do?" This question came when Lillian had been at Kensington more than a week; when gentle Mrs. Grant knew the whole history of the girl's life.

"I do not know."

"I think I can tell you. I have an old friend, whom I have known all my life, she is very much alone, and she needs a companion. Lady Leigh is so rich that the question of salary need not trouble you. She lives so quietly that you need never fear meeting anyone who know the Dacres. If all you need is a quiet place, where you can rest from the worries and troubles of your life, I am quite sure you will be happy with the Countess."

"I am sure I shall. Oh, Mrs. Grant, how good you are to me!"

"Am I? It is not the future I would rather arrange for you. Lillian, ever since I saw you I have quite understood my brother's infatuation. Dearest, are you quite sure you cannot be my sister?"

"I am quite sure."

"And yet I should have thought Archie a man to win any girl's heart."

"Ay, if it were to be won!"

"You mean that yours is not? Oh! Lillian, you cannot be grieving for Sir Ronald?"

"Oh, no!"

"For whom then, child? If you have a lover and quarrelled with him, don't you think you are spoiling both your lives? Lillian, I am sure you were never meant to lead a lonely life."

"You don't understand."

"Make me understand, dear."

"You will think so badly of me."

"Never."

"I love him so," said the girl, with a sort of sob. "You see he came to me when things were at their darkest, he trusted me; he was so noble, so generous, I learned to love him almost without knowing it."

"And he?"

"He never loved me—never; but I think he liked me until I told him how I had deceived his cousin. He said, then, my life had been a living lie. Oh, Mrs. Grant, when I touched his arm and prayed of him to forgive me, he shook my hand off as though it had been a serpent's."

"That is not like Guy Ainalie!"

"Guy Ainalie?"

"My dear, you say he was Lady Dacres' cousin—of course you mean Mr. Ainalie. He is quite fit to be a young girl's hero. I understand the whole story—except his being stern with you. I should have thought him full of pity for a lonely girl like you!"

Lillian shook her head.

"He is so good himself he could not bear with my folly."

"Well, the next time I see him I, shall give him a piece of my mind. Now, my dear, will you come with me to call on Lady Leigh?"

They found the Countess alone looking very sad and troubled.

Mrs. Grant at once introduced the subject of her errand. To her surprise the Countess asked, abruptly,—

"Is Miss Green related to the Castillons?"

"No, she is an orphan with no family ties."

"She reminds me of the family very much."

Ah, you are too young to remember them, Mary, but they all had those dark blue eyes. I should not like to receive any one into my house who claimed kindred with the Castillons. They have been the cause of much sorrow to me and mine."

"There is no one in all the world with whom I can claim kindred, Lady Leigh," said Lillian, earnestly.

"And your age?"

She heard it, still with that puzzled look upon her face.

"It is strange how strongly you resemble the Castillons!"

Lillian began to fear her blue eyes would lose her the post of Lady Leigh's companion; but Mrs. Grant, with admirable tact, led the conversation to another subject, and before they left it was quite settled that her protégée should take up her abode at Eaton-square the following week.

"I am very glad you will be there, dear," she said, stroking the girl's soft, bright hair. "That is such a desolate home in spite of all its grandeur, and I think you will bring a little sunshine into it."

"I will try. Is Lady Leigh a widow?"

"Ay, and well-nigh childless. She has one son—the present Earl; but though they live together there is a great gulf between them. No one knows exactly how it arose, but Lord Leigh was always one apart from his family. He served in India for years in the same regiment as my father. No one expected he would come into the title. I remember so well the first time we met him afterwards, and my husband congratulated him. He smiled the saddest smile I ever saw, and said his honours had come too late."

"Is he so old?"

"He is in the prime of life, but he has had some hidden care."

"Poor man!"

"Aye, brighten his path if you can, Lillian. I fear his home is very dreary; and though he is reported to be the most fascinating man in London your heart will be in no danger."



"Oh, no," half-said; "but Lady Leigh may not like me to entertain her son."

"Lady Leigh would like anything that brought a smile to Gerald's face. I will leave you at home now, Lillian; for I have some other places to go to."

The day came for Lillian to leave the cheerful home at Kensington, but she had none of the fears which had assailed her on going to Chestow.

Baton-square was not far from Kensington. Mrs. Grant was a favourite friend of the Countess. Surely she and Lillian would meet sometimes.

One trouble she had, indeed, which she could never quite forget.

Guy Ainslie had lost his faith in her, the man to whom she had given her whole heart, despised her, and thought her a "living lie."

There were times when poor Lillian would have given years from her life for one sight of Guy Ainslie's face, for one kind word from his lips.

The Countess received her very kindly; and it seemed that her duties would be very easy ones—to read to Lady Leigh, to dine with her, and to sing to her in that twilight-seemed the chief of them.

Before a week had passed the Countess had grown to love the fair, sweet face, and to welcome it with delight.

"It is just as though you were my grand-child," she said one day, fondly. "Do you know, dear, except my son I have not a relation in the world!"

"Is Lord Leigh abroad?"

"He is in Scotland," Gerald said always travelling about somewhere. "He cannot rest."

"Not even in this beautiful home?"

"Here least of all. He is all I have left in the world, and yet he hates me!"

"Oh, surely not!"

"Well, he can never forgive me," the old lady's voice sank to a whisper. "I wronged him cruelly, Lillian; but it was nearly twenty years ago. He might forgive me now when I am old and feeble, when he knows I have not long to live."

And still the days passed and the Earl did not come; still his mother longed and waited for his presence.

"It is no use," she said one day, turning away from the window with a sigh; "he keeps away from his home just because I am here. He will not forgive me even when I am dying!"

She had been very ill the last few days. The doctors had frankly told Lillian she wanted, rousing and cheering; and so at last, touched by that yearning lament, Lillian forgot all ceremony, all shyness. She sat down one evening and wrote to the Earl.

It was a very simple note, and she did not even sign it. She forgot that it was going to a powerful nobleman. She wrote as plainly as though he had been a working man. She told him his mother's illness increased from day to day, that she fretted continually over his absence, and she begged him to come home while the Countess was yet strong enough to rejoice over his presence.

"Hem! the new companion, I suppose," was the Earl's comment. "A pretty hand enough," slipping the note into his pocket. "Well, it is a lady's letter and well expressed, but it is a great liberty to write to a man of my age and tell him he's neglecting his duty. I suppose Miss Green, as the Countess calls her, is strong-minded, and thinks it her province to go about informing the world."

So he put the note aside, and tried to cast it from his thoughts, but he could not quite forget the simple words of entreaty; and so the third week in December when the nights were cold and frosty, he drew up in a cab before the familiar house in Baton-square as naturally as though he had left it only the day before.

"How is my mother, Popham?" he asked the butler.

"My lady is better, my lord; she is in the boudoir with Miss Green."

"Miss Green!"

"My lady's companion," explained Popham; "she has been here ever since the autumn, my lord!"

"Ah, and my mother likes her!"

The butler was an old servant, and a privileged person. He rubbed his hands as though to give more emphasis to his speech.

"It is my belief, my lord, the Countess could not think more of Miss Green if she were her own daughter!"

The Earl went to his own room; he changed his travelling clothes for an evening suit, and then presented himself at the boudoir-door quite ready to behold a tall angular female with a depressing face and great powers of governing.

He was mistaken—his mother was alone; and very—very warm was the welcome he received.

"I have wanted you so, Gerald!"

"You know, mother, I am of a restless nature, and—"

"You might come home sometimes!"

"What is there to make home attractive to me?"

"Oh, Gerald, if only you could forget. If only you would let time heal your sorrow. You are young yet! The loveliest girls in London would not refuse you. You might have a happy home—a loving wife to-morrow if you pleased!"

"And I do not please! I prefer to be faithful to a memory!"

"It is not natural?"

"Perhaps not!"

"The best loved wives are forgotten in twenty years!"

"You don't understand!" he cried, impatiently. "If my darling had died in my arms—if I had received her parting words, and kissed her cold dead lips, I should have felt differently. I should have known then all that was possible had been done. I should have known she had felt no pang, I could have spared her. As it is her face I see before me! I have travelled far and wide since I became Lord Leigh. I have mixed in the gayest society of London and foreign cities. I have seen everything most beautiful in art and nature, and do you think I have forgotten my wife? I can see her face before me now, as clearly as though we had parted but yesterday!"

The Countess felt a new perplexity. If this was so—if his heart had never swerved from its fidelity—how would he bear to see day by day a face which was his dead wife's image? If she who had known but little of Miss Costillon had been struck by Lillian's speaking likeness, how would it be with the husband whose heart still ached for his loss?

"And so you have set up a companion, mother?"

"Yes," timidly. "Mary Grant recommended her to me. I have been thinking, Gerald, I might give her a holiday now you are come. I must have kept her had I been alone."

The Earl felt a kind of relief at the prospect of not meeting his mistress, and he readily agreed.

The Countess, who feared the very sight of Lillian would drive him from his home, proposed to her favourite that very evening that she should go to spend her Christmas with the Grants.

"Mary wrote to invite you only yesterday," she said, pleasantly. "Send her a line to say you will be there to-morrow."

"But you will be so lonely!"

"I have Gerald, dear. With my boy at home I can spare even you."

And so Lillian found it of no avail to protest any longer; and the next day, without even a sight of the Earl, of whom she had heard so much, the golden-haired companion was driven in my lady's own carriage to the house of her friend.

She reached there just at dusk.

"Mother" was out, the children told her, but they made her take off her things; and then, drawing a chair to the fire, the little

ones clustered round her. They had loved her very dearly when she was staying with them; and partly because their mother did not like to hear her called "Miss Green"—partly from the desire of their little affectionate hearts—they called her by the name which would have been hers had she married Archibald Darby—*aunt*.

A very picture they made sitting in the fire-light; the flames falling full on Lillian's golden hair and the innocent, childish faces. They were in the drawing-room, which was not a stiff, formal apartment, but the evening resort of the family. Visitors were always shown in there; so when an old family friend, whom the page knew quite well his mistress would be sorry to miss, presented himself, he was asked to wait.

"Mrs. Grant can't be long, sir. The children are in the drawing-room."

Guy Ainslie knew the little Grants well. True, he had not seen them since his summer visit to Castle Dacres, but their memories would be long enough not to have forgotten him.

"I'll go and wait in the drawing-room."

The page held the door open. Guy advanced. He saw a group gathered in the fire-light. Then he almost reeled.

Its centre was the girl who had told him with her own lips she had deceived him—who had admitted she was a sinner.

Well, she did not look a sinner now. Not one of the little children who clung to her so affectionately had a face more full of innocence. As beautiful as when he saw her at Castle Dacres, and yet with that strange shadow of pain upon her brow, was the girl whose fate had haunted him these last autumn weeks.

She saw him, and she grew white as death. Then the children recognized their friend and plattered round him.

"Mother's out! This is *aunt*—she's come for Christmas. She tells such splendid stories!"

"*Aunt*!" It went to Guy's heart.

Of course all these months he had known quite well that she was lost to him, that she could never be anything in his life, and yet it made her seem ten times farther off to learn she belonged to another.

"You took my advice then," he said, coldly.

"I do not understand you!"

The children were there, and busy making a dozen remarks on their own account. They never heard these brief sentences.

"You know what that child called you just now?"

"Yes."

"And my advice to you was to bear that title—to let their uncle marry you."

"Was it?"

He little knew the effort it was to her to keep so calm.

"Of course it was. Archibald seems to have deserted me; he never sent me wedding cards."

This was intelligible to the children.

"Uncle Archie isn't married!" they cried with one voice; and then, hearing their mother's knock, they scuttled downstairs to tell her of the two arrivals.

"What does it mean?" Guy asked, in a strange, hard voice.

"It means," answered Lillian, trying to speak firmly, "that Mrs. Grant is my dear friend, and her children have chosen me as an adopted relation."

"Oh!"

"Their mother knows *all*," said Lillian, simply. "I have not deceived her."

"And she says?"

"She thinks I was more sinned against than sinning. She thinks that, having no true name of my own, that being friendless and alone, I was not to blame for keeping my sad history a secret. She says I was not bound to tell Lady Dacres that from being a rich man's adopted child I became, through his sudden death, lonely and nameless."

"Was that your secret?" cried Guy, in a

dazed voice. "Was that what you meant when you said you had deceived me?"

"That, and that only! I know it was very wicked; but, oh, the temptation was cruel, I never realized how much I had sinned till our last conversation at the Castle, when you judged me so harshly."

"I was a fool," he cried, bitterly.

"Nay, all you said was true, only it hurt me so."

"You cared a little then for my opinion?"

"I cared too much, I am afraid," she said, gravely; "you had been very, very kind to me."

"I was under a great mistake," he replied, gravely. "I have wronged you cruelly in my thoughts. Do you think you can ever forgive me? I am sure you would if you knew how your fate has haunted me all these weeks."

"I have been well and happy."

"And you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive. I know, to anyone just and upright as you are, I must have seemed very wicked."

"Wicked!" said Guy, musingly—"wicked with those eyes. How could I ever have thought it?"

"You won't think so any more," pleaded the girl gently. "For the sake of all the kindness you have shown me long ago you will let us be friends?"

"Never while I live," cried Guy Ainslie, passionately; and then, before poor Lillian had time to recover from the shock of this cruel speech, Mrs. Grant entered, full of kindly welcome to her visitors and apologies for her absence.

(To be continued.)

A NOVEL wall-covering design has been introduced, composed of a loosely-woven, ecrú-tinted wide canvas, tacked top and bottom to the wall and fastened on the seams with heavy rope, giving the effect of canvas panels; the frieze, composed of a diamond network, of slender rope netted after the manner of fish seines and tacked to each intersection to the wall by galvanised iron handwrought nails, is decorated by two rows of tassels, composed of unravelled rope strands; the dado composed of a net-work of heavier rope is divided into panels by means of ropes; a deep band of dark red, and a band of lighter red, laid under dado and frieze, show through the networks with pleasant effect, while ropes laid round door and window casings, and twist at the corners and tops into trefoils, flatly applied, finish this inexpensive but handsome wall furnishing. Hunting scenes, fairs, players engaged in rural games, and banqueting parties are among these subjects on these canvases.

THE Ice Palace at Montreal last winter attracted much attention, but in the extreme North of British America there are regular glacial villages, as the Eskimo excel in this kind of architecture. Rectangular slabs, three to four by six or six and a-half feet, are cut from some neighbouring fresh-water lake where ice has formed to the depth of six inches. At a rough approximation these slabs may be said to be about the size of an ordinary door. The slabs are placed upright, resting on their ends and joined so as to form a circular pen of from ten to fifteen feet in diameter. Over the top of this the summer sealskin tent is spread for a roof, supported by tent poles crossing at convenient places and held in place by a lashing of sealskin about a foot below the top of the ice slabs. These ice igloos are as transparent as glass, and before they are covered by the drifting snow, or their interiors are dimmed by the smoking of the sooty lamps, a night scene in one of these villages, especially if it be large, with brilliant burning stone lamps in full blaze, is one of the prettiest sights imaginable. They are, however, only temporary dwellings, for as soon as the snow has collected in sufficient quantities for building purposes, butts are constructed of it, and the natives desert the ice houses as soon as the snow huts are completed.]

## HIDDEN FROM ALL EYES.

### CHAPTER XLV.—(continued.)

"I would rather be just the reverse," muttered Godfrey, with a passionate glance at the pale, proud face beside him. "After all," in a louder tone, "what is there in the tie of blood? It may hold you tight when you don't want it, but it is sure to snap under pressure. It may give you a warm enough welcome when you can meet on even ground, but I should be sorry to trust to it for so much as a dinner, if I hadn't a penny to buy a crust of bread."

"Wouldn't you come to us if you were in trouble?" asked Meta, in dismay.

"Depends how far I had gone," with a mockery of a smile.

"But surely you would run a better chance with us than with anyone else?"

"Lose your respectability, and a relation instantly regards you as a pot of pitch which he is afraid of touching for fear of being defiled."

"My dear boy," expostulated Sir Edward, "are you judging from your own experience?"

"Experience? No. That belongs to the past."

"Then these are pleasant anticipations for the future?"

"More probable than pleasant."

There was a pause; to some the words had a hidden meaning, to others a melancholy foreboding. Meta's spirits sank as she remembered the conversation of the morning; Mr. Mallon's rose, as he thought that Somerville's disgrace meant his own acquittal. There was something so strange about his behaviour that he was almost tempted to fancy that he was on the point of giving up the game.

It might be due to Miss Maynard's influence—who was certainly in his confidence. She would not be likely to countenance a fraud, but unless she promised herself as the reward, no man on earth would run headlong to ruin at the mere bidding of a woman's voice. She had vowed that she hated him; but that might be only a feminine way of concealing love before the important question had been asked. There was certainly a gentleness in her manner towards Somerville this evening, very different to her usual conduct; and the red flower in her breast was a flat contradiction of her former assertion that she never wished to wear his favourite colours. Still he had always stuck to his conviction that she was in love with Vere, and it was difficult to give it up. A woman must be utterly bereft of sense to have her choice of either, and not choose the frank, true-hearted soldier, instead of that intriguing dissipated-looking man of the world.

"You are going to ride Limerick to-morrow?" Godfrey asked suddenly. "I was looking at him to-day; he couldn't be in better condition."

"I shan't take him out at all; the temptation would be too great."

"How do you mean? You are not going to funk?"

"Certainly not; but Sir Edward doesn't wish me to follow."

"I never knew you so meek before," with his habitual sneer.

"You don't know what it costs me," raising her eyebrows disconsolately.

"You must come. I won't go without you."

"What nonsense you talk!" drawing away from him coldly. "My absence won't spoil the run."

"It will play the deuce with everything. You shall come. Remember it is the last time."

"I don't know that; but if it is, I can't help it; Sir Edward won't let me."

"What is that? Making me out a hard-hearted tyrant?" asked the Baronet, with his cheery smile.

"I was only saying—" began Nella, but Godfrey interposed.

"Is it true that you won't allow her to hunt?"

"Quite true. Do you want her to break her neck?"

"No more chance of it for her than for the whole lot of us. She rode splendidly. Ask Deyncourt, Grainger—any of them."

"I saw how well she went with my own eyes, no need to ask anyone else. But remembering what it has cost us," his voice growing husky, as he thought of his little girl who started so full of health and spirits, brought back cold and still on a hurdle. "I should have thought you were the last person to advise it."

"No reason why it should happen again!" he muttered, crossly.

"Are you going to ride Pearl?" asked Meta, forgivingly, though she was rather hurt that Godfrey had never asked if she would be at the meet.

"No—Dandy," he said, shortly.

"I thought you were keeping Pearl on purpose."

"Then you thought wrong."

"Won't you take her out for the last time?" Nella inquired, in a low voice.

"No. I have other work for her to do. Did you think I could leave her behind?"

"Then you are going?"

"I am not going to stay here to be hooted at."

"And when time has softened everything, you will come back?"

"Why should I?"

"For Meta's sake."

"She wouldn't have anything to say to me, Nella," looking at her almost fiercely. "You must be an angel to me to-night and to-morrow, or I never shall have the pluck to go through with it."

"Oh Godfrey, pray for strength," she said tremulously, "and it will be sure to be given you."

"I do!" he exclaimed, with passionate blasphemy. "Your eyes are my only heaven."

With a shudder she looked forward to the morrow. If his courage failed the task would devolve upon her.

### CHAPTER XLVI.

THE morning broke cheerfully; a brisk wind from the North-west scattered the clouds, and a bright sun made every damp blade of grass, and every wet sprig in the thicket glitter with the rays of the diamond.

Vere rode by Sir Edward's side, listening to the usual melancholy forebodings of a keen sportsman, who is sure to fancy that the scent won't lie, or else a fox won't be found because he is heart and soul in the day's sport.

Mr. Mallon followed with Godfrey Somerville—an ill-assorted pair—whose hopes ran in diametrically opposite directions.

Each was too much occupied with his own concerns to think of the other, although Godfrey, unaware of his actual presence beside him, was wishing he could mount Victor Maltravers on the worst horse in his uncle's stables, and see him break his neck before his eyes.

"If he were done for Nella might let me off," he thought ruefully, as Dandy picked his way daintily through the mud, and a knot of pink coats appeared in the distance.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, presently, "there's Miss Arkwright. I never expected she would be out to-day."

"Didn't you? I did."

"Perhaps you had superior information!"

"Where should I get it from?" facing round upon him at once.

"From her special friend, Vere."

"He is an old friend, that's all."

"Most people say he's going to marry her, so I don't call that 'all'!"

"Then most people tell a falsehood!" the blood rushing into his face.

"Or you are in the dark, which is more likely."

"I don't agree with you," humbly.



"Do as you like, never want in for her myself."

"Do you think she would speak to you?"  
"She might, if I gave her the chance. She will have to, by-the-bye, this evening, when I go to her mother's house. It rather amuses me, but they could not give me up, on account of my belongings."

"I should fancy Miss Arkwright was capable of taking her own line and sticking to it," his eyes fixed longingly on the lovely face which was turned to his for an instant in brief recognition. The two men raised their hats as Dulcie pulled up her horse by Sir Edward's side.

"She hates me like poison, but she has not the courage to cut me. Vere, I conclude, will give her a lead, and you will follow to pick up the pieces. Thank goodness I've no one to look after but myself! By Jove, they're off!" Dandy bounded forward, and relieved Mr. Mallon of his master's presence.

Unlike Sir Edward, he did not care "a hang," as he expressed it to himself, about the day's sport, so long as he got Dulcie to himself in a quiet corner.

His opportunity came, for the first fox was chopped in a wood, and whilst everyone else was in a fever of impatience, they had the chat they wished for by the cover-side.

"No news, I suppose?" she said, softly, as her eyes roamed in every direction, to be sure that they were not watched.

"Glorious news, I trust," and his dark eyes shone with joy. "At three o'clock this morning everything will be decided."

Her face grew deadly pale.

"How?"

Sorrow had become so habitual to her that hope seemed almost bewildering, and she could scarcely speak.

He told her all he knew, and she listened breathlessly.

"You think you are sure to find her?"  
"I am sure of it. This is worth waiting for," he said, hoarsely.

"Oh, Heaven! can it be true!" and she bent her head to hide her face.

"Bear up, dear, don't give way. That fiend Somerville is somewhere about."

"I feel such a fool, as if I must cry; so idiotic of me when I've been like a stone before," and she turned her face like an April day towards him.

"I try to school myself not to hope too much," he said, gravely. "Your mother might not care to have a marked man for her son-in-law."

"Then she would have to do without a daughter," in a shy whisper.

"Through good and evil report, nothing has made a difference to you?"

"No, nor ever would, so long as you remained yourself. I'm not to break my neck to-day?"

"No; for Heaven's sake, take care," looking at her in alarm, as if Brakespeare were not standing as quietly as a lamb.

"I'm going to be as careful as any old woman to-day. There was a time once when Jack used to stick to me like a leech, because he fancied that I wanted to come to grief. He knows better now."

"But you haven't told him who I am?"

"Not for the world. He would have been wild with joy that the first person he met would have asked him what was the matter; but he has got an absurd idea into his head that I am going to console myself with Captain Vere, so he is quite comfortable."

"More than I am," with a smile. "Such a fright as I look, he takes me at a horrid disadvantage."

"You have your eyes left," looking up at them fondly.

"Scarcely to be seen under these bushes of eyebrows. I feel such an awful sweep, and Dandies will scarcely allow me to wash my face for fear of interfering with my complexion."

"It would be a pity. How shall we ever get through this evening?" her tone changing.

"We must manage it somehow. You will

have to make much of me, for it may be my last."

"If I thought that I would pray for heart disease or something else to kill me quick," her lips trembling; "but you don't think you will fail?"

"On my honour I don't. The three ladies and the old gentleman are to go in the landau, we three men in the brougham. The under-coachman is to be induced to take too much, and my man George will drive. Coming home we get rid of Somerville if we can; if not, we take him with us. After all, it might be as well to have him under our own eye. I don't know though, it would be dangerous. We will leave him behind, if possible. Drive round by Nun's Tower, where I have three men already on the watch, draw up at a little distance, send the carriage away, down another road, get out and hide in the bushes on either side of the doorway, and make a rush for it as soon as a petticoat appears."

Her face was flushed with excitement as she listened with parted lips, and her heart beat wildly.

"Oh, if I could only be there!"

"You would be terribly in the way. Be ready to welcome me when I come back with the lost Robin in my arms."

"You will let me know at once?"

"I'll bring you the news myself—if good."

"It must be good; Providence couldn't be so unkind to us."

"I don't know about that," said Victor, reverently. "He offers us a Heaven."

"But are you anxious to go there?" with raised eyebrows, as she thought how much better he was than herself.

"Not at all," he said, promptly, "so long as I have a chance of you for my wife on earth. Heigh-ho!" as the horn too-tood loudly from the inner recesses of the wood. "They're moving off, and we must be after them. What an ardent sportsman I am, to be sure!"

Godfrey Somerville rode that day as if he had made up his mind that he did not wish to see another. Even the straightest goers shrugged their shoulders, and said if the fellow had no pity for himself he ought to have some for his horse. But Dandy was equal to everything, and, entering into the spirit of his rider, never refused the most impracticable of bullfinches or the widest of water-jumps.

With a white, stern face he followed close in the wake of the hounds, though the pace was tremendously fast, never striving either to spare his horse or himself when the opportunity offered.

The rest of the field were left far behind, and there were only two or three in at the finish; but he was amongst them, close on the master's heels. Vere was well up near the front, but Mallon was nowhere to be seen, and Sir Edward had found out that he was no longer so young as he used to be.

Slowly and, by his own choice, alone Godfrey rode home, the rays of the sunset at his back, the darkness of the future glowering like a thunderstorm in front of him.

"Hard lines," he thought to himself, as he pondered over his luckless position. "If I had been a prosperous country gentleman, with a fat purse and a pretty wife, ten to one I should have come a cropper over the first hedge, and broken my neck decently. I'm sure I did my best to do for myself, and Dandy, too; but it was no use. I'm not allowed to kill myself, and no accident will happen to me. Suppose I'm reserved for the gallows when I've committed a big enough sin to deserve them. Hold up, you brute!" as the tired horse stumbled; "I'm not anxious for broken bones if I can't be finished off entirely."

Nature had made him physically perfect, and before his mind was sored by trouble he used to be proud of his own well-moulded proportions. Now he only cared to be superior to that "ugly fellow, Mallon," and not inferior to Vere in Nella's eyes.

Meta was standing in the hall waiting for him when he came in, after leaving his horse in the stables, where he stopped to scold Peter

for not having appeared at the right time with his second mount.

"Here you are," she exclaimed, with a sigh of relief. "I was beginning to get so nervous." "Rather late to begin. It's not the first time I've been out with the hounds."

"No; but my father said you weren't riding like yourself," looking up into his face with anxious eyes. "He said it was just as if you had set your heart on breaking your neck."

"You see I didn't manage it," throwing his crop on the hall table, and seeming more bothered than pleased by her solicitude.

"No; but you should be more careful," with gentle gravity. "Remember poor Lina."

"Don't you think it would be better taste to drop that?" with an angry scowl. "Since you and I have talked of marrying, you had let her be."

The tears sprang to her eyes. "I know she would have wished it. It isn't as if I were taking you from her."

"Not at all!" sarcastically. "And yet I might have posed for the rest of my life as her disconsolate lover; and every eccentricity would have been put down to that—and forgiven."

"Everything you do is always forgiven," she said, with spirit. "My father and mother they are always on your side, and no one goes against you—except perhaps Nella," she added reluctantly.

"She shan't go against me to-night," setting his teeth resolutely. "Tell her to come here; I want to speak to her."

"I don't know if she has finished her tea," wondering at his manner, and not at all admiring it. "By-the-bye, I never thanked you for the lovely bouquet I found in my room."

"Prize it, put it under a glass-case, or wrap it up in wadding; it is the last you will ever get."

"Godfrey!" in dismay.

"Ah Godfrey! You may say that, one day, when I shan't be here!" Then he turned away from her, took up a small wooden box which had just come down from London, and went into the library.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

"Meta tells me that you won't me," said Nella, hovering on the edge of the door-mat.

"Come in, and shut the door."

"No thanks, my tea is getting cold."

"All right, if you want the whole household to hear me. Perhaps Vere is within earshot; if so, he will be edified."

"He has retired to his own room, and so has Mr. Mallon, both too muddled to make an appearance."

"I'm muddled enough, too," looking down on his boots, which were well bespattered; "but I'm only waiting to give you these flowers. Are you afraid to come in, and look at them?"

"Not at all; but I'm so sorry you've taken so much trouble," with a glance at the Covent-garden address on the outside of the box, "for I really couldn't wear them."

"What flowers have you got on your dress?"  
"Lovely Gloires de Dijon, which Lady Somerville gave me. You see red wouldn't go with them at all."

"Would these?" lifting the lid of the box, and taking out an exquisite spray of roses, and a bouquet to match. "You took it for granted they were red," enjoying the surprise in her face; "but I wouldn't have you wear the same as Meta. Camellias are stupid things, but roses have tongues." He held them up, and stepping forward she bent her face over them in involuntary admiration. "Place them close to your heart, and hold them to your lips. They will tell you that a man's passion is no child's play. It is the only thing that could console a man for the loss of his honour!"

"And you must lose it all—poor Godfrey!"  
"You don't pity me—you only remember that I've been a brute to you, and you are delighted to think you will be rid of me!"

watching her face with keen, though half-closed eyes.

"I pity you from the bottom of my heart, and I will wear your flowers this evening," a winning smile breaking over her face; "and be glad to think you gave them me as a sign we parted friends. Good-bye," with a little nod.

"Stay," he said, hoarsely. "This is the last time we meet together in this house. I love you with my whole heart and soul," his eyes glowing like living coals, "and I don't care who hears me!"

"Hush! hush! think of Meta!" and catching up his flowers, she ran out of the room and across the hall, seared at the utter recklessness of his bearing.

When she reached the landing at the top of the stairs she stopped to regain her breath.

Cyril Vere was standing straight in front of her. He pointed to the roses.

"Who gave you these?" sternly, as if their beauty were an offence to him.

"Mr. Somerville."

"And what does he expect in return?"

"Nothing, except that I should wear them," recovering her composure at a jump.

"And you will wear them?"

"Certainly, they are much too good to be wasted."

"Yes, wear his roses—steal him from the poor simple girl who loves him," he said, slowly. "Sell yourself, body and soul, to the devil! I wish to Heaven I had never seen you!"

Then he dashed to the ground the one lovely Marshal Niel he was carrying, and trod it under foot viciously, inwardly dubbing himself a fool for the half-crown he had spent on it.

Then he went downstairs with his nose in the air, and she went slowly back to her room, knowing that she would have willingly given up every rose in her hand for one leaf of the broken blossom which was lying outside on the carpet.

She flung the flowers down on her bed, and paced the room restlessly.

Cyril had no business to speak to her like that, when he had never done anything but snub her ever since he had been in the house. She had looked forward to his visit as the acme of bliss, and what had it brought her? Nothing but pain.

From the first he had chosen to fancy that she was in love with Godfrey Somerville—a poor compliment, when he told her at the same time that he was unworthy of any woman's friendship.

From the first he had never given her a chance, but always condemned her without a trial, at the same time flirting with Miss Arkwright to such an extent that the whole county had decided they were going to make a match.

Godfrey Somerville was no gentleman, in spite of birth and education; he had treated Meta in a shameful manner, offering his hand to the heiress, and making love to another girl behind her back.

He had treated her (Nella) about as badly as he could, rude and insolent so long as he disliked her, and only pretending a violent passion for her when he knew that it would disgust her to the last degree.

He had done his best to ruin her happiness out of selfish spite; he had insulted her when she had gone out of her way to do him good; and now he chose every opportunity of making her feel a traitor to the girl whom she loved like a sister.

She had spoken the truth when she said that she hated him, but a woman's heart is always open to compassion, and in the hour of his despair she pitied him.

"I won't be dictated to," she vowed to herself, with the hot blood rising to her cheeks. "Just for to-night I will be kind to him, and then I shall never see him again. It can't do any harm. To-morrow will be such a terrible day for him. I couldn't bear to be cruel on the last night."

Her reflections were interrupted by a knock

at the door, and Meta came in, looking pale and unhappy.

"What is the matter, dear?" asked Nella, affectionately, her own troubles forgotten in a moment.

"I don't know," and Meta sank disconsolately in a chair.

"Yes you do. Tell me at once. You never have any secrets from me," sitting down by her on the floor, and taking her hand.

"I expect it is all nonsense. You would only laugh at me."

"Not if you are really bothered. Is it about Mr. Somerville?"

"Yes," in a low voice. "I don't believe he cares for me a bit."

"He has always been fond of you."

She moved her foot impatiently.

"Yes, as a cousin—What's that?"

"And now he's sorry," the corners of her mouth drooping.

"If he is it is because he knows he is not worthy of you. He is quite right—he never was."

"I—I was never half good enough for him, and he sees it!" the tears dropping slowly down her cheeks. "Oh! Nella! if I had been more like you he would have liked me better!"

"He used to hate me!"

"But does he now?"

This was a difficult question, and Nella was obliged to lean her chin on her hand and reflect a little before answering. She wanted to be perfectly honest, and yet it was awkward.

"My dear," she said, slowly, after a pause, "he is a man for whom I never had the smallest respect. He knew it and it made him angry. He suspected that I liked my cousin much more than himself, and he was jealous, not out of love," she added, quickly, "but from the meanest sort of hatred; and so he took to picking flowers for me, and paying me all sorts of attentions on purpose to annoy Cyril. It wasn't nice of him, was it?"

"No; but are you sure, that's all?" very dubiously.

"Not quite. He tries to flirt with me sometimes, but he knows that I hate him; and I am only kinder to him now because I think he is unhappy. Oh! Meta, dear, I would give anything to make you love him less!"

"Why?" drawing back suspiciously.

"Because I see such sorrow in store for you."

"Perhaps you want him for yourself?"

"Not if he were the last man left in the world!" she exclaimed, scornfully. "If you can think such a thing as that, I can't talk to you!"

"Oh, Nella, forgive me!" holding her hands tight. "I didn't mean it, but I am nearly out of my mind with thinking."

"Poor little thing! you would never be happy if you married him."

"Nothing shall prevent me!"

"Not even," hesitatingly, "if you thought he did not love you quite enough?"

"No; when he saw how I worshipped him he would be sure to love me more. Why did you say he was unhappy?" still feeling uncomfortable at Nella's superior knowledge.

"Can't you see it for yourself?"

"Yes; but you seemed to know about it."

"Perhaps he will tell us soon, till then we must wait; but Meta, dear," looking up earnestly into her face, "watch him carefully and see if he is the sort of man you could really trust your future to. Can you respect him? Can you feel that he would help you to be better—that you could trust him always to do what was right and honourable, even when your back was turned, and you couldn't see?"

"Of course I could!" with a burst of tears.

"Lashouldn't love him a bit if I didn't!"

She got up from her lowly seat feeling that her efforts were thrown away.

"Then it is no use talking about it. Dry your eyes quick, or you will look a fright this evening."

Meta obeyed. As she came up to give her

a kiss she caught sight of the flowers on the bed.

"Oh! what exquisite roses! Where did they come from?"

"Like yours, from Covent Garden," pouring some water in a basin, and putting them in without much care.

"But these are lovely!"

"I don't suppose he chose them. Yours, I presume, are his favourite colour?"

"Of course—if you mean Godfrey's. I thought these came from Captain Vere?"

"Cyril couldn't afford it, poor fellow! He bought me one, so he did think of me,"—with the deepest sigh.

"Where is it?"

"He never gave it me. It's outside—in fragments."

"Why on earth did he pull it to pieces?"

"Because this is the most detestable world that mortals ever had to live in. Go, there's a darling! I want to do my hair before dinner."

She also wanted to escape a humiliated burst of tears, which she felt was imminent; but her mood changed so soon as Meta had gone, and it was with a cold smile that she looked down on the fragrant blossoms which brought summer into her room in the midst of cold December. If the roses had tongues, as Godfrey said, they could only tell her of a love that she must not listen to; and the only blossom that might have spoken was thrown away by the hand that ought to have given it.

Grieving over shattered hopes she combed out her beautiful, shining hair, wondering what the coming night would bring forth without a suspicion of the part she was to play in the proceedings, and envying Dulcie Arkwright even the years of her sufferings, because her lover had been true to her from first to last.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

"DEAR Lady Somerville, how glad to see you," murmured Dulcie Arkwright, as she pressed her hand and no one would have guessed, from her calm and graceful bearing, that her heart was beating with the force of fifty hammers, because of a certain red head which had just appeared in the door-way.

Meta came next, with her mother's diamonds on her white neck, and her cousin's red camellias in her hand, and nestling in the left-hand corner of her black satin body, which sparkled with jet. Nella followed, also in Spanish lace and black tulle, with Godfrey's roses on her breast and in her bouquet, but no one noticed them because of the exceeding beauty of the sweet, pale face, with its aureole of shining hair which crowned the whole. Sir Edward, beaming, as usual, with a kindly smile on his patrician face, with Vere close behind him looking so unusually proud and defiant, that Jack scarcely recognized him as his "dear old chum;" and then two others—the man she hated more than any other man in the whole of God's earth, and the one she loved.

The tips of the fingers to the first, and only a hurried hand-clasp to the second, whilst lashes that feared to raise themselves dropped quivering on the softness of her cheeks.

There was a buzz of voices round her, but she scarcely heard what they said—scarcely, in fact, knew what she was doing, because of that quaintly distorted figure leaning up against the wall. Victor Maltravers there, under the roof of Deepden Chase! He seemed like one of those horrid, deceitful dreams, which had cheated her night after night into a few minutes of rapture, and only made the succeeding day seem ever so much blanker in consequence.

She roused herself with an effort, saw after partners for those who had not sufficient attractions to get them without a slight amount of outside pressure; introduced eager strangers to the girls they particularly favoured, and let her own card be filled up without



much attention to her personal predilections. She was dressed in white because Victor liked it better than any other colour, and wore only eucharist lilies in a wreath on her left side. With her pure and perfect beauty little adornment was necessary, and in her simple dress she looked a wondrously charming specimen of womanhood.

The rooms at Deepden Chase were large and old-fashioned, with high dados of white carvings, and walls panelled with exquisite paintings of mythological subjects. The band was placed in a gallery at the end of the first drawing-room, exactly opposite to the conservatory, which led out to the second.

Chinese lamps were hung amongst the shining leaves of the camellias, and low velvet seats were placed in convenient nooks amongst the flowers. Long creepers hung down from the glass roof, and helped to shrine retiring flirtations from the unpleasant curiosity of the public gaze; but Jack had made the lighting of his special business, and had left no pleasant twilight for imprudent vows.

The hangings of the two drawing-rooms were of violet velvet edged with gold fringe, which were handsome in themselves, but had a decidedly funereal aspect, especially at night. Still they had been there, or others like them from time immemorial, and Mrs. Arkwright was of the old school, and looked upon change as a desecration.

Dulcie had been too much occupied with most important concerns to care about her surroundings, but now that her lover was here, close by her side, though silent and undemonstrative, she looked round the rooms with a critical eye in the pauses of the first waltz, and thought they were decidedly behind the times.

"Your cousin looks very pretty to-night," she remarked to Vere, who happened to be her partner. "I needn't ask who gave her those roses."

"Somerville!" shortly, as if the word stung his lips.

"Not really? I thought he was engaged to his own cousin."

"I don't know who he is engaged to; but I believe he makes love to them both at once. One has his roses—the other his camellias."

"And is neither jealous?"

"I can answer for Nella: don't know about the other."

"You won't let her marry him?" looking up at him in surprise.

He shrugged his shoulders, afraid of saying the words which rose to his lips—"I trust to to-night."

"For my part," in a whisper, "I would rather marry Calcraft. He tried to hang some one, though it wasn't his trade."

"You will give Mallon a dance presently? He looks as if he could eat me for being in his place."

"I thought it was better to wait. You see, he is here as a stranger."

"There can be no danger. He looks as unlike himself as possible."

"I think he does," with a fond smile; "but with that wretched Mr. Somerville in the room I am obliged to be doubly prudent. Poor, dear little mother!" glancing towards the old lady, who was sitting in a corner in her favourite armchair looking like a piece of waxwork, with her snow-white hair and rosy cheeks, her black satin dress ornamented with a broad collar of old point. "Do you think it is wrong to deceive her?"

"You couldn't help it. It wasn't in human nature to let him be left behind."

"You are too kind to say anything else. What makes your cousin look so unhappy? I hope you are very good to her."

"Unhappy! Why, she's in fits of laughter; listening to all sorts of nonsense from Jack."

"She smiles with her lips, but her eyes are sad; you men are so easily deceived. Have you asked her to dance?" charitably anxious that every one should be as happy as she was herself.

"Not yet; I thought I would leave the field open."

"And leave her at the mercy of every stranger who asks to be introduced to her! Let me tell you that she is the belle of the evening, and your chance is lost."

"She won't mind it."

Slowly they went round the room to "Under the stars," which Coote and Tinney, as usual, played to perfection; and everyone who looked at the sunny, smiling face said Dulcie Arkwright had regained her lost beauty.

"Danced good luck for Vere," murmured Lord Fitzhugh to his neighbour, young James Witherington, the new squire of Bevingden. "Hasn't a brass farthing to bless himself with, and Dulcie is one of the best matches in the county."

"Seems to run in the family. Somerville's mad after the Maynard girl, and he is sure to come into a potful of money when the old gentleman dies."

"When I'd bet on the old horse. His staying power is worth half-a-dozen of the young uns. Bad lot—going to the deuce as fast as he can—pity he should take such a pretty girl with him. You think it's a case?"

"Look at his eyes when he is speaking to her—wonder they don't scorch her."

"Women like that sort of thing. A volcano inside, ice without, that's the style to go down. I daresay if you listened to him, he is only asking her to have a cup of tea. Queer thing that about his sister," after a pause. "I always fancied there was foul play on his side, and not Maltravers. Heard anything of him?"

"Yes; ran up to the club yesterday, and heard a rumour that there was something up. Rather a joke if he was cleared just in time to cut out Vere."

"Pshaw! not the last chance of that. How would it be if I cut in myself? A game's never lost till one side has won."

With a knowing glance at his friend, Lord Fitzhugh hurried to the corner where Dulcie was standing with a knot of men round her. "This is our dance, Miss Arkwright," he said, mendaciously.

"I beg your pardon," looking demurely down at her programme, "but have you changed your name to Brown?"

"Yes, during the last half-hour. Don't let us waste any time, the dance has begun."

"If you will be good enough to step on one side," said Colonel Brown with a broad smile, "we will begin at once." And slipping his arm round Dulcie's small waist, they glided off past the disconsolate viscount, slowly, and in perfect time to the soft, melancholy waltz.

Metta, as the heiress of the Somerville acres, was sure to have plenty of partners, and she enjoyed herself after her usually quiet fashion, pleased with this man's step, and that other man's pleasant chatter, and happy beyond expression when Godfrey did his duty by her and asked her for the first dance.

She could not see the signs of the coming storm, though Somerville's face was deadly white and Nella's pale and thoughtful; though Dulcie, every now and then in the midst of jest and laughter, gave a quivering sigh of fear, and Mr. Mallon seemed turned into a stone statue, as he leant in silence that he rarely broke, against the doorway.

To some amongst them the whole scene was like the feasting and revelry before the deluge. Above the notes of waltzes rose the groan of a shipwrecked hope, and mixed with the sound of the loudest laughter, was the sob of a girl's despair.

Dulcie shivered with a passing thrill of fear as, for the first time that evening, her lover wound his arm round her and drew her gently to his heart. To lose him now, after this one wild ray of hope, would be more hard to bear than all the desolation of the past.

"Are you cold, dear?" he asked, in surprise.

"No, only frightened," smiling with pale lips. "Go on—to think is dangerous."

When the waltz was over, their steps went

involuntarily to the conservatory. There side by side, amongst the flowers, they sat for one happy quarter of an hour, with so much to say to each other, yet few words on their lips; their eyes exchanging wistful glances, their hearts too full for speech, divinely content, because for a few minutes they were at last together.

Only a few yards off stood Vere, his fair head making havoc amongst the white blossoms of a camellia, as he stood by his cousin's side, and gave her, in his usual bungling fashion, a piece of his mind.

"Of course it's no good my saying anything," he remarked, crossly, "but I can tell you, that before this time to-morrow you will be sorry."

She shook her head.

"I shan't be sorry, because I am doing it with my eyes open."

"You think there's no harm in marrying a scoundrel, if you know all about it first?" his eyes flashing resentfully.

"Who talks about marrying? Surely I may talk civilly to a man for a few minutes; I may accept the flowers which he has taken the trouble to order from town; and I may dance once or twice with him in the course of an evening without being burdened with him for the rest of my life?"

How pretty she looked with the light playing on her reproachful eyes, and the fairness of her neck, and yet he hardened his heart against her.

"You might do all these things," he said, sternly, "and I should be the last man to say a word against you; but you have encouraged him shamelessly till you are almost bound to marry him, in order to save your character."

"Cyril, you go too far," and she threw back her head in passionate anger.

"You have gone further than any modest, pure-minded—"

"Hush! you shan't say it!" her bosom heaving under her lace tucker. "I have done nothing that I would be afraid to confess to your mother. You don't understand; some day you will," with a strangled sob, "and then you will be sorry."

"If I could by any possibility be mistaken—if I could believe that eyes and ears had both misled me, I shouldn't be sorry, but gladder than I ever was before. But this is nonsense," his voice hardening like his heart. "You have chosen to compromise yourself with the only villain of your acquaintance, and you must take the consequences."

"I am quite prepared. What a comfort that you will be too far away in India to see them."

"I am not there yet," coldly.

"No, I only wish you were, and then," her lips trembling, "I should never have known how disagreeable you could be."

"Disagreeable! Simply because I do my duty?"

"Duty is always a pretence for the unkindest, meanest cuts of all."

"I wonder that you know anything about it. Do it to-night; send Somerville about his business, and be something like the girl you used to be at Elstone," his tone softening, the harsh look melting from his eyes.

"I am doing it," she said, proudly, "but not in the cold, pharisaical way you wish. Whatever my faults it has never been my way to kick a man when he was down."

Godfrey came up at the moment, and held out his arm, bending down to whisper something in her ear.

She placed her hand on his coat-sleeve with her most winning smile, in reckless defiance of Vere's presence, and without another look at her cousin suffered him to lead her back into the drawing-room.

"Never my way to kick a man when he was down!" the words lingered strangely in Cyril's ears. "Had she heard anything? Could she have guessed? and had pity more to do with it, after all, than love?"

These were problems which puzzled his brain, whilst the tiniest ray of light, no bigger

than a glow-worm's star, twinkled through the darkness.

### CHAPTER XLIX.

Two o'clock! the fatal hour was approaching.

Victor was grave with overpowering emotion, and Dulcie went about through the brilliantly lighted ball-room, with lips as white as her dress.

"Is Somerville mad or drunk?" and Vere leant wearily, more tired in mind than body against the wall by his friend's side.

"Don't know, I'm sure. Off his head somehow," his eyes following his enemy with a vindictive glance as he disappeared into the conservatory, bending in earnest conversation over the troubled face beside him.

"He has crushed his little cousin, till she looks like a limp rag."

"And yours?" rousing himself to take an interest in Vere's affairs, as well as his own.

"Not crushed, but infatuated," with a heavy sigh. "What shall we do if we can't get rid of him?"

"Take him with us, and face it out as best we can. In less than half-an-hour we ought to start!"

"Yes, I must soon be looking after Lady Somerville. It would be as well to send off the landau first."

"Want a partner?" and Jack Arkwright caught hold of him by the coat-sleeve. "Come along, I've got the jolliest little girl in the room all ready for you, and she's a stunning dancer!"

"Dance with her yourself. I've done my duty thoroughly," trying to shake him off.

"Duty be hanged! She's too good for you by half. Here she is. Captain Vere, Miss Stevenson. He's an old chum of mine, so pray be good to him," and with a roguish look he darted off to find another victim, leaving Cyril in the hands of a buxom country damsel, who looked as if she could manage him.

Meta was sitting by the side of a most uninteresting partner when Godfrey came up to her, and told her that Lady Somerville was ready to go. She rose obediently, delighted to have his escort, and without waiting to say good-bye to anyone, for he seemed in a great hurry, ran upstairs to put on her cloak. He was waiting for her at the bottom of the stairs when she came down, and gave her his arm to the hall door.

"Where's Nella?" she asked, as she caught sight of her mother inside the carriage and her father standing by the door.

"Coming," he said, briefly.

"Get in, my dear—get in," exclaimed Sir Edward, who was always in a hurry when starting. "Where's the other one?"

"With Vere, I fancy," said Godfrey, carelessly. "How fidgety old Spider gets! He can't stand for a moment!"

"No more he ought on such a night as this! Just go and see if you can find her."

Somerville departed, but presently returned, saying that there was not a trace of Miss Maynard to be seen.

The old baronet got in a fuss, and said they must go without her.

"Oh, my dear!" remonstrated his wife, "I don't like to leave her alone with only the gentlemen!"

"You won't leave her, for we are coming at once," said Godfrey, bundling his uncle into the carriage, and shutting the door after him. "Surely Vere can take care of her if I can't!"

"Girl's own fault," muttered Sir Edward, as he drew up the glass.

Then the footman took his place on the box, and Somerville drew a deep breath of relief as the horses started forward, and the landau rolled quickly down the drive.

"Now for it," he said to himself, as he tossed off a glass of champagne in the supper-room in order to brace his nerves. "Everything depends on my luck during the next ten minutes."

Then he went off to cast his last die for love and life!

Only a quarter of an hour before he had been sitting by Nella's side in the most secluded corner of the conservatory. The light of the lamp overhead worried him. He jumped up and blew it out.

"What did you do that for?" she exclaimed, nervously. "I am neither afraid of seeing or of being seen."

"There is enough light to see you by, and prying eyes I detest!" Then there was a long silence.

Only a far-off murmur of music came to that distant corner, and the rest of the conservatory was nearly empty.

Nella's heart was full of anxiety for others and bitter pain for herself. By her misguided generosity she had forfeited her own happiness and Meta's. That simple-hearted, unsuspecting, innocent girl was trembling in the balance. Godfrey's eyes were wandering over her, taking in every charm as they went, and his wild heart was throbbing with a thousand hopes and fears. At last he spoke, and his voice was hoarse, as a man's voice is apt to be when his heart is stirred to its depths.

"You might love me a little to-night, Nella, if only because it's the last time."

"As if I could put it on and off like a pair of gloves"—her eyes met his and sank.

"You might put it on"—bending closer—"just to give a fellow one gleam of light before the darkness."

"Lightning only makes the night-scene darker."

"But stars don't, Nella!" she felt his hot breath on her cheek and shrank away. "I would have given up everything for you!"

"I wish I could think you were sorry for the evil you had done," she said, gravely, looking away from him, at the spiral frond of a fern.

"I am sorry for nothing, except that it doesn't last to the end. I don't think I could rest in my grave if Maltravers gets off scot free!"

"You are not in your grave yet. There may be long years before you, which Heaven has given you for repentance! Oh, Godfrey, don't you believe in Heaven?"

"Yes, sometimes," with a slight smile.

"Now, for instance, when you are close to me!"

She got up from the seat.

"If you talk so profanely I won't stay with you!"

"Sit down and I'll do anything you like."

"Don't you know it is an angel's mission to reclaim a sinner?"

"But I'm not an angel."

"Aren't you? I fancy them very like you."

He got up slowly and stood by her side; then pulled out his watch and looked at it. "Past two o'clock on Wednesday morning; by half-past three I shall be dead to all who have either cursed or blessed me—dead to little Meta, who has always been good to me—dead to my uncle and aunt, who, in spite of all their stupid prejudice, treated me like a son! If I were really on my death-bed you would refuse me nothing! Can't you fancy it now, and let me touch your lips with mine?"

"No!" shrinking back amongst the camellia leaves. "Give it to Meta!"

"Meta! whom I've kissed a hundred times in my life!"

"But she loves you so?"

That was an accepted fact to be passed by without remark, and treated as such love most often is, with unrelenting indifference.

"Just one," he pleaded, his dark eyes glowing as if with inward fire; and then he bent his head and took it, his heart bounding with joy, whilst hers became like a stone.

"Good-bye!" she said, faintly; and then added, "Take me back to Lady Somerville," as she stooped low over her roses.

(To be continued.)

If you desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold your tongue.

### QUESTIONING.

Do they come to us in dreams—  
The friends we used to know,  
When our sleeping fancy teems,  
With the scenes of long ago?

Do they come to ease our pain,  
When our hearts are filled with sorrow?  
Do they whisper hope again,  
When we dread the sad to-morrow?

Do the parents that we've lost,  
Bend in pity o'er our bed,  
When our spirits, tempest-toss'd,  
By the tempter on are led?

Do the children that we've loved  
Come to us with kisses sweet?  
Do they leave the realms above,  
Our yearning souls to meet?

Do they, waiting just before  
As we climb the hill in youth!  
Keep us in the narrow path—  
Guide us in the way of truth?

When we reach the dizzy height  
Of life's successful strife,  
Do they stand beside us there,  
Pointing to the better life?

Do they slowly go before  
Down the west-side hill of life,  
And cheer our spirits sore  
With the weary, weary strife—

When we reach the river's brink,  
Will they stand beside us there?  
And, if our spirits shrink,  
Point us to the mansions fair—

On the glorious hills of light  
That lie beyond the river,  
Where the presence of our God,  
Shall delight our souls for ever?

B. S. M.

### REDEEMED BY FATE.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

OWING probably to her excitement, Haidée could not sleep that night, but lay in bed, her thoughts taken up by the problem of Philip's unaccountable silence; and so much occupied with it, that it drove away even the remembrance of what Sir Jasper had said about hastening their wedding; and her prospective meeting with her father, to which, since knowing his secret, she had looked forward with a certain amount of dread.

The atmosphere, meanwhile, had grown heavier and more oppressive, and by-and-by, a vivid curve of blue light flashed across the sky, and was followed by a loud, sharp clap of thunder. Then the storm broke—no electric summer shower, with harmless, rose-coloured lighting playing about, but a straight, swift rush of waters, as if Heaven's fountains had been broken up, and were all pouring out their mighty torrents to flood the earth.

The lightning was incessant—long, jagged, violet streaks that glanced through the mist with a terrifying and ghastly beauty, and which followed each other so closely, that night was made brighter than day; and the air filled with the low roaring of a continuous sound.

Haidée was a coward at temper; she dared not even move to get up and ring the bell for her maid, but lay there trembling, and hiding her face away from the blinding white glare. How long she remained so she did not know; fear loses count of time, so slowly do the minutes lag; but, at last, there came a shorter, sharper, louder report, then a noise that was not thunder, and a mass of loosened masonry fell rattling down into her room—the chimney had been struck.

Haidée screamed aloud; but in the war of the elements no one heard her, and the storm



continued with unabated violence for about twenty minutes. Suddenly it subsided, the rain ceased, the lightning came only now and then in fitful gleams, the thunder died away in faint echoes among the distant hills, and the earth lay calm as a sleeping infant, under skies from which the clouds had rolled, leaving it a clear, dark blue robe, spangled all over with diamond stars.

Then Haidée got up, feeling rather ashamed of her abject terror (it is so easy to be brave when there is no longer any cause for alarm!) and lighting a candle, went to the fireplace to see what damage had really been done.

A heap of bricks and mortar lay on the floor, and the mantel-piece itself—a very old and curious one of antique oak—had apparently become loosened by the shock, for its projecting centre had fallen out, thus revealing a hollow space that it seemed had been used as a hiding place for documents; perhaps, in the old days, when Charles Stuart was flying from his Puritan pursuers, and loyalty was treason to be crushed out under Cromwell's iron heel. If this had been so, its secret had been handed down to succeeding generations, for there were some papers in it now, and they did not appear to be of any very great antiquity either.

Haidée stepped carefully amongst the debris, and took them out, and then carried them to the table to examine by the light of her candle. The principal was a large, blue envelope, sealed with the Ruthven crest, and its superscription ran thus:—"Certificate of the marriage of his parents, and of the baptism of Philip Greville Ruthven, born at Llan-tressan, June 16th, 18—."

For a few minutes she could only stare at it in amazement, and wonder if she were dreaming. The "Philip Greville Ruthven" could be no other than her former lover, and it had fallen to her lot to discover the documents for which he had so anxiously sought. What should she do with them?

Instinct warned her it would not do to give them into the possession of Sir Jasper, who would, she felt assured, not stir a finger to help the artist to substantiate any claims he might be in a position to advance. No, Pierson was the one to whom they must be delivered; he was an old and trusted friend of Philip's, and would certainly do his best to forward the young man's interest. So to him she resolved to go in the morning, as early as she could; and having thus determined, she went back to the fireplace, to make sure she had taken all papers from the recess. In doing so, she stumbled over a brick that lay in her way, and fell forward, twisting her foot under her.

Soon after breakfast the next morning, as Seaforth and Pierson were seated together in the little, clean parlour of the "Ruthven Arms," a servant came to the latter saying a "person" wished to see him; and the "person," on being shown upstairs, proved to be none other than Susan Gaisford, Haidée's maid, who delivered a note and package, which she had been, she said, instructed to give into the hands of the barrister himself.

On the girl's departure he opened the note, which contained a few words from Haidée, stating in what manner she had found the sealed packet, and saying she would have brought it herself, but that she had hurt her foot, and could not walk very well; and then, after examining the writing and crest on the envelope, Pierson proceeded to break the seal; which he thought himself, under the circumstances, justified in doing.

There fell out two documents, one the certificate of the marriage of Charles Philip Ruthven with Grace Seaforth, solemnised at the Church of St. Mark, London, and the other the baptismal certificate of Philip Greville Ruthven, their son, born at Llan-tressan in the following year.

Pierson read both documents over twice—convinced himself they were genuine, and then passed them across to Matthew Seaforth.

"So you see, after all, I have made a mis-

take," he observed; "and it was with Charles Ruthven, not Jasper, that your sister eloped. Well, the truth has come out at last, and in a strange way, too!"

"And do you think Sir Jasper knows it?" asked Seaforth, recovering from his astonishment.

"Certainly. He's probably known it from the first, and stole the letters because he was afraid they might betray it. Don't you see that Philip, as Sir Charles's son, would have been heir to the title and estates, supposing his identity were proved?"

"Yes, of course. And you believe Sir Jasper, being aware of his existence, determined to ignore it in order to retain his own position?"

"Without doubt."

"But why did he allow Philip to stay at the Priors so long?" inquired the old man, whose reasoning faculties travelled so much slower than the barrister's keener intelligence.

"Because he was afraid of exciting suspicion by sending him away in too great a hurry; and probably, when he found out Philip had obtained a clue to his parentage, he thought it better to have him under his own surveillance, so as to be able to checkmate him in any move he might make. No doubt he examined his letters, and that accounts for my last one not reaching him."

"And what do you think of his disappearance now?"

"I believe Sir Jasper could solve the riddle if he would," was the answer.

"Unless," added Seaforth, doubtfully, "he fell over the cliffs."

"Which I do not think likely. Besides, he was a powerful and expert swimmer, and—as I find the tide was in at about the time he would be passing—would have had every chance of saving himself. There is also the fact that no one saw him leave the Priors the second time. My impression is that he did not leave them."

"But, surely, you don't imagine for a moment that Sir Jasper has—" Seaforth did not finish his sentence, but stared agape at his companion, whose eyes were moodily fixed on the floor.

"That Sir Jasper has murdered him? I would not answer for it. It was to his interest to get rid of him, in order to secure his own position; and, for my part, I would not trust Sir Jasper Ruthven as far as I could see him!" exclaimed Pierson, energetically. "Besides, you see how the case stands. Here is a young man missing—disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up—and that at a time when his prospects were brightest. Something must have become of him; and at Heathcliff Priors we must find out what that something is. I shall go at once to the nearest magistrate, state as much of the case as I think necessary, and apply for a search warrant—which I don't think I shall have much difficulty in obtaining."

His surmise proved correct; and that same afternoon, accompanied by a constable, he presented himself at the Priors, and announced to its master the purpose of his visit.

"You have a magistrate's written authority to search the house!" exclaimed Sir Jasper, dumbfounded, while his face grew very pale. "And may I ask on what grounds it was obtained?"

"The fact that the last time that Mr. Greville was seen was when he entered the Priors."

"Seen—by whom?"

"Miss Haidée Darrell!"

The baronet said not a word more, but a look dawned on his face that boded ill for Haidée's happiness when she became his wife.

He knew it would be utterly useless to attempt any resistance of the warrant, and so he submitted to the inevitable with as good a grace as he could assume, and led the way upstairs; his demeanour, meanwhile, being

nervous and hesitating, as the barrister at once perceived. Clearly he was very far from being at ease, whatever ground there might be for apprehension.

"Do you wish to see Miss Darrell's rooms?" he asked.

"No."

"Or my sister's?"

Pierson hesitated, then said,—

"Yes, if Miss Ruthven will kindly permit it."

It happened that Haidée herself was in Sybil's boudoir, and with her was Dr. Clifford, who had been called in to look at her foot, which was considerably swollen, but not really hurt. Only as the wedding was so near, Sir Jasper had insisted on the doctor's attendance, saying he had no desire to stand at the altar with a limping bride.

On the threshold stood Sybil. She flashed a glance of rapid inquiry on the trio; which Sir Jasper answered,—

"I am doing the honours of the house," he observed, "which this gentleman"—indicating Pierson, with a satirical smile—"has applied to search."

"To search!" she repeated, bewilderingly.

"Yes, in the hope of finding the missing artist, Philip Greville."

Sybil staggered back with a little incoherent exclamation, and a deadly white spread itself like a veil over her face. She was so utterly unprepared for this that the shock deprived her for a space of her ordinary self-possession. But she felt Pierson's sharp eyes upon her, and met them with as much firmness as she could command. While he and the constable were making an examination of her room she contrived to retain her calmness; but as soon as they had gone, she fell down on a couch, utterly unnerved.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Haidée, who was sitting in an arm-chair with her foot bandaged.

Sybil did not reply, but pressed her hand against her left side, while the pallor of her face changed to an ashy greyness.

"I have a sharp pain—here," she said to the doctor, who seemed rather alarmed at her appearance, and knelt at her side to listen to her heart beating.

"Have you had it before?" he asked.

"Yes, once or twice, but never so badly as now."

He went and fetched a little brandy-and-water, which he gave her; and when she had drunk it he said,—

"I have my stethoscope in my pocket. If you will allow me, I will see if there is anything wrong with your heart."

"Anything wrong! Oh! no, I am sure there is not," she answered, with an uneasy laugh. "It was a passing spasm, nothing more."

"I don't know"—gravely. "I think you had better let me make a partial examination."

Sybil was no coward; but she had never had a day's illness in her life, and had an idea that she must, therefore, be invulnerable. More for Dr. Clifford's satisfaction than her own, she permitted him to sound her chest, and all the while she was listening with intense eagerness for every footstep.

Pierson and her brother had gone in an opposite direction to the picture-gallery, in order to reach which they would have to re-pass the door, so until she heard them return she was safe from all fear of the secret panel being discovered.

When Dr. Clifford put down his stethoscope he looked anxious.

"Well!" she exclaimed, with her old hard laugh. "Have you to break to me the news of my speedy dissolution?"

"I have to tell you that the action of the heart is not what it ought to be, and that you will have to be careful," he answered, evasively.

"I don't believe in being careful—no 'care' will prolong one's life a minute beyond the time ordained us," she commented, shrugging

her shoulders. "I am a fatalist, you know, and hold that what is to be will be."

"If you receive my warnings in that way, it is more waste of breath to utter them," he said, rather offended by her slighting tone. "Still, I have cautioned you, and I caution you again. You must guard against any sudden shock."

"Absurd!" she exclaimed, irritably. "How can one guard against a shock? If it were known beforehand, it would cease to be one."

Dr. Clifford said no more, but took his leave, thanking Providence that it gave him few such patients as Miss Ruthven!

Almost as soon as he had gone she heard the footsteps for which she had been listening, and, unable to control her overwhelming excitement, went outside and followed Sir Jasper and his unwelcome visitors, taking care, however, that they should not see her.

Pierson was not a man to do things by halves; he searched well, and, rambling old house as it was, peered into every nook and corner—hardly, however, with the hope of finding anything to reward his trouble. Longest of all he stayed in Philip's own room; and when he came out stood in the corridor, looking round.

"Where does that lead to?" he asked, his attention attracted by the green-baize curtain, and not waiting to have the question answered, he advanced towards it, and pulled it aside.

"You see it is the end of the passage," rejoined Sir Jasper, calmly; but, for all his calmness, there was a strange apprehensive look in his eyes.

"There is no outlet beyond this?"

"No!"

Pierson examined it closely, but there was nothing in its appearance to suggest Sir Jasper was not telling the truth, so at last he turned away.

"Now, I believe you have seen all the house," said his unwilling host, with a sigh of relief. "Are you satisfied?"

"Quite—so far!"

"You no longer suspect me of hiding away your friend?" with a sneer on his mouth-tached lips.

"I have no valid reason for doing so!" returned Pierson evasively, and he left the Priors rather inclined to believe he had had a lost journey.

On entering the "Ruthven Arms" he found Seaforth in their private sitting-room, entertaining a big foreign-looking man, who was drinking from a huge tankard of ale.

"This is Hermann, an old comrade of mine years ago," he said, by way of introduction, as Pierson entered. "I met him in the village, and it was so long since we parted that we hardly recognized each other."

"We grow old, sure," observed the German, with a deep laugh. "Time it have not stood still for ze one or ze oder."

"But you are a good deal younger than I am!" said Seaforth; "and"—rather enviously—"you seem to be as strong as ever."

"Yes," stretching out his brawny arms. "I am strong—ver strong. There are not many vich can master me now!"

Not to disturb their *tit-d-tit* the barrister retired to a little table in this window recess, and began taking some notes, while they continued the conversation his entrance had interrupted. Just at first he paid no attention to what they were saying, then some stray words caught his notice, and he listened eagerly.

"So you gave up the old business altogether when I left?" said Seaforth, presently.

"Yes, de coast-guardsmen, dey grows so careful and vat should I do by myself? Sare Jasper Ruthven engage me, and I am vis him ever since."

"But what did he engage you as?" asked the colonist, putting the same question as Philip had done once before.

The German rubbed his cheek thoughtfully before answering.

"Well, I see after things; I am a sort of

steward!" he said, as if he felt some difficulty in describing his position.

"And is it a good situation?"

"Sehr gut! Very good, I would say," grinning. "I save lots of money, and by-me-bye I go back to ze 'Vaterland' and spend it!"

He rubbed his huge hands together gleefully, and took another long pull at the tankard.

"Then I suppose Sir Jasper is a liberal master?" said Seaforth, who evinced a child's delight in hearing the gossip of his old companion.

"He is not my master!" was the reply, and Hermann added, quickly, "I would say, he never interferes vis me, he let me do exactly what I like!"

"He always used to have the character of being haughty and bad-tempered," observed Seaforth.

"He know better than show his bad tempers to me—one word of mine is quite enough to stop him!" returned the other boastfully. "Oh! no, Sare Jasper and I we understand each oder, and so we get on well together—ver well!"

"By-the-bye," said Seaforth, "has anyone ever discovered our old hiding-place—the cave?"

The German glanced round apprehensively. Pierson's hand was held up to his face, and he did not appear to be taking the least notice of what was going on.

"No, the cave was never discovered. I remembered the promise we made each oder not to tell of it, and I haven't."

"But the promise doesn't matter now; there is no longer any occasion for secrecy."

"Yes, there is. I would not have anyone hear of it for all ye world!" exclaimed Hermann, vehemently.

"Why not?" asked Seaforth, surprised.

"Because I live a honest life now, and desire not that people should know vat I did in ze past. You vill not tell!" catching him by the sleeve, and speaking entreatingly.

"No; certainly not, if you don't wish it!"

"You promise—you swear?" went on the German, growing more excited.

Seaforth laughed and shook his head. "I won't swear. Why should I? But for all that, you may be sure I won't babble de secret."

And with this Hermann had to be satisfied.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

AND in the meantime, how fared Philip himself?

On hearing the sound of the bolt being shot to be rushed to the door, with the result of finding it firmly closed; and after wrenching hard at it for a few seconds, the conviction that he was locked in forced itself upon him, bringing with it a sickening sense of fear to a nature essentially courageous.

Had the door fallen back and become fastened—fastened of its own volition, or had human hands wrought the evil?

He did not stay to reason out this question, which was indeed of small moment to him just now, when all his energies must be devoted to the task of effecting his own rescue.

He looked round, and, as a preliminary, examined the cell in which he had become immured.

It was small and vault-like, with walls of solid masonry, which were covered with the damp that exuded in clammy drops of moisture, and threw out a sickly, unwholesome smell.

There was no window; but above the door a little space filled in with cross-bars of rusty iron—meant, as it seemed, more for ventilation than the purpose of giving light.

This Philip fixed on as the best means of trying to escape, and having first of all stuck his taper in a niche in the wall, he—though with great difficulty—contrived, by means of the inequalities of the stones, to mount up until he reached the aperture.

But then he found his efforts at a standstill.

The bars were very thick, and so firmly fixed that all attempts to wrench them out were fruitless; and only ended in tearing the skin from his hands, and leaving his flesh out and bleeding.

He did not give up for some time, but the longer he tried the more convinced he became of the folly of continuing; and so at last he came down, and stood in the middle of the cell, looking round on the walls that seemed destined to be his tomb.

He shuddered as he looked. He was brave, but what courage is there strong enough to face unmoved such a possibility as confronted him? Death looked on from a distance, as a penalty to which we know our friends are liable, and which, we suppose, in a vague sort of way, may sometimes claim ourselves, is a widely different thing to death staring us full in the face—standing before us in our pathway, and saying, with a grim smile, "There is no escape! No doctor's medicine, no prayers can save you now! Your hour is come, and you must come, too!"

And such a death! Not a quick stroke given in the battle-field, or a few hours sharp pain, and then the last breath drawn in the presence of sorrowing friends, who will recently close our eyes, and decently stretch out our limbs, but a long, slow agony—the agonies of hunger, thirst, and despair!

Cries of impotent misery, which none may hear; appealing entreaties for help when no help is possible; piteous wailing for the lost life that seems now so infinitely farther than ever it did before; and then the dawning of the death hour—alone!

A deep groan burst from the young man's lips, and he covered his eyes with his hands, as if he would shut out the dreadful vision.

Then hope awoke in his heart. It was clear the existence of the passage was known to someone in Heathcliff Priory. Might not that someone pass by his door and hear his cries?

But at the moment the idea suggested itself, he acknowledged its wild improbability. It was too slender a chance to be called a hope, so he must endeavour not to count upon it.

Just then his attention was called to his taper, which had burnt low down, and would soon be out, thus leaving him the double horror of darkness.

He hastily turned out the contents of his pockets to see if there was anything likely to be of use to him.

A clasp knife, a bunch of keys, a fusee-box, and the small bottle of oil Parser had given him to grease the lock of his portmanteau—these were all; but the last-mentioned suggested an idea, which he proceeded to put in practice.

He pulled the cork out of the bottle, and cut a round piece from the top, in which he made a hole with his knife, then drew some strands of wool from his coat—which happened to be of tweed—and pulled them through. Afterwards he knocked the neck from the bottle, and then put the cork and its wick to float on the oil.

When it was lighted it gave out a glimmer—feeble indeed, but still sufficient to partially illumine the gloom, and infinitely preferable even in its obscurity to absolute darkness.

Somewhat encouraged by the success of this small experiment, Philip blew out the taper, the remaining piece of which he put away for future necessities, and opening his knife, examined the blade.

It was a strong one, very strong, and meant for use, but whether it would stand the strain to which he intended putting it was an extremely doubtful question. At all events, he would try.

His purpose was nothing more nor less than cutting a piece out of the woodwork of the door—which he knew must be some inches thick—and making a hole large enough in which to insert his hand, so as to draw back the bolt; for before entering he had observed it was secured by this mode of fastening.

He began very carefully, for fear the steel should snap, and was wise enough to control



his impatience; for he was well aware the task he had set himself was one of great difficulty, and the chances of success proportionately small; but when one is striving for dear life the faintest shadow of a hope is sufficient to work upon.

And so the moments wore away in a dead silence, that was only broken by the sound of the knife forcing its way through the hard oak, and at last Philip paused to look at his watch.

It had stopped at twelve for want of winding up, and as far as he was able to judge it must now be about three o'clock.

He had been working at the door more than four hours, and as yet had only cut two sides of the square he intended making; and, worse than this, he was growing sick and faint through want of food, for owing to the exciting events of the previous day, he had taken little or no refreshment.

This sensation he made a violent effort to overcome, thinking to himself that if he already felt the cravings of hunger, what would they be later on, supposing he did not succeed in liberating himself.

Whether this idea gave a fresh impetus to his exertions, and made them more violent, cannot be said, but suddenly the knife snapped off close to the handle, and he was again brought to a standstill.

But only for a moment. Then he recommenced with the smaller blade, his progress necessarily being much slower; and it was several hours before he had pierced the thickness of the door, and at length withdrew the block of wood (a square of about two inches), which he had succeeded in cutting.

"Thank Heaven!" he muttered aloud, in his gratitude, and pushed his hand through the opening, whose position he had calculated to a nicety, for it was just above the bolt, which he was thus enabled to withdraw.

The door fell back, and he stood on the threshold—so far a conqueror!

Now this atom of saved taper was useful, for the floating wick would not have stood being carried about, and, besides, the oil was nearly exhausted.

He struck a light from his fuse-box, and proceeded very cautiously to the door at the bottom of the steps, by which he had come from the Priors, and which he found locked, a fact that convinced him his imprisonment had been no accident, but the result of premeditated design.

He did not stay to wonder how it happened, but retraced his steps, and, passing the well, proceeded along the passage, which had evidently been constructed with some attempt at ventilation, and was far from being as close and murky as might have been imagined.

Another flight of stone steps led down a very considerable distance, and at the bottom was a second passage opening to a door, barred and bolted, but as the fastenings were all outside Philip had no difficulty in opening them.

Then yet another door, covered with green baize, met him; and on unfastening this he found himself, to his extreme astonishment, in a curiously-shaped apartment hung round with curtains, and furnished with every comfort, if not actual luxury.

It was lighted by a lamp swinging from the ceiling, and had evidently been occupied very recently, for there were various books, papers, and periodicals lying on the centre table, close to which an easy chair, half filled with cushions, was drawn up.

The young man asked himself whether it could be a vision, so strange did it all appear, — so much more like a page torn from the "Arabian Nights" — than downright, actual reality, and yet no dream was surely half so vivid!

And so he stepped inside, and just as he had done so some curtains at the other end were pushed back, and a man stood on the threshold apparently as greatly astonished as himself.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE presiding genius of the place was attired in a long, loose dressing-gown, falling from the throat to the feet, and belted round the waist with a crimson silk girdle. Under his right arm he held a crutch, with which he helped himself along.

This, together with the extreme and waxy pallor of his face, seemed to announce him as an invalid; but for all that, he was a man of singularly noble presence, and showed signs of having once been very handsome.

His features were clean cut, his eyes large and dark, and a long, full, silky, brown beard reached almost to his waist.

For a few minutes he and the young man stood looking at each other in complete silence, then he said:—

"Who are you, and what brings you here?"

"I have been shut in a cell in the passage, but by whom I cannot tell," replied Philip, succinctly.

"But where do you come from?"

"Heathcliff Priory. I am an artist engaged in copying some of the pictures there."

The elder man put his hand to his brow with the air of one who is bewildered.

"Dreams, dreams!" he muttered half to himself. "I have lived so much in them that I cannot distinguish them from reality. It is the same face reproduced, or else—I am mad!"

He gazed intently at the young man, who carried on his countenance the signs of extreme fatigue and exhaustion; and then an idea seemed to occur to him, and he went slowly to a side-table, from which he took a decanter of wine and a glass.

"Drink," he said, "you must want something."

Philip obeyed very readily, and not only drank the wine, but ate some sandwiches, watched all the time by this strange dweller in the subterranean retreat, whose eyes never once left his face.

"I am wondering," he said, with outspoken curiosity, after finishing, "who you can be, who are thus buried in the earth, as it were."

"I might be excused for forgetting—it is so many years since I heard the sound of my own name," was the sad reply; "but I think I was once called Charles Ruthven; and I used to be the owner of the house you have just mentioned—Heathcliff Priory."

Philip stared at him in the utmost astonishment. Charles Ruthven! Why, he had been dead these many years. Was this man insane, and was it for that cause he had been shut up here?

The notion was but momentary—there were no signs of insanity in those dark full eyes—nothing indeed save the despairing apathy of hope long since dead.

"Have you ever heard of me?" he continued.

"I have heard of Sir Charles Ruthven, who was drowned."

"But he was not drowned—he fell on the beach, badly hurt, but alive, and was brought here twenty years ago, where he has remained ever since. I tell you I am he!"

"Brought here—by whom?"

"His cousin, Jasper Ruthven, the man who has since usurped his title and estates," was the response uttered with an earnest solemnity that was in itself convincing.

"Then," said Philip, agitated, "do you mean to say that all these years you have been a prisoner here?"

"I do say it, and more than that, it is the truth."

"What a double-dyed villain Sir Jasper must be!" cried the artist, involuntarily. "But how has he contrived to keep your presence a secret, and how has he brought you food?"

"By means of a German, whom he has bribed very heavily, and who is devoted to his interests. This Hermann is supposed to be a servant at the Priors, and reaches me through a hiding panel in the picture-gallery."

At last Philip understood many things that

had heretofore puzzled him. He remembered how Hermann slept in the "haunted wing," and how perturbed Sir Jasper had been on the night of his arrival, when he found the apartments appropriated to the artist were situated in the same gallery. He had doubtless been afraid to have them changed lest his motives might be suspected, and had ascribed his scruples to the evil reputation the place had acquired—a report he himself had originated, in order to keep the household away from its vicinity.

Of course, too, it was through the panel the baronet had disappeared the night he took the letters; and the hand the young man had seen, he had no doubt, belonged to Hermann, who was about issuing, but, on perceiving his presence, had retreated into the passage. Yes, it was all clear as daylight, and he could have stamped his foot in angry disgust as he thought that the blood of the unscrupulous man who was the moving spirit of all these mysteries ran in his own veins.

"But have you never tried to escape?" he asked Sir Charles, of whose veracity no doubt remained in his mind.

He pointed to his crutch.

"My right side was paralysed by the fall," he said; "and it is only quite lately I have been able to walk at all. No, I have never tried to escape, because I knew the impossibility of the attempt. My captors have always been careful in bolting the doors after them."

"Does Sir Jasper come to see you?"

"Very seldom, perhaps about once a year, but Hermann comes every week. He was here two nights ago."

Two nights ago! Was it then only that time since he had seen the hand? To Philip it seemed months instead of days!

"But now you must, if not make an effort for yourself, at least aid me in making one for both!" he exclaimed, with redoubled energy. "We must get out of this place and soon."

"How will you do it?" inquired the other. "The door leading from the inner chamber there is barred and bolted on the outside. It is quite hopeless to attempt doing anything with it, so there is absolutely no other egress than the way you came."

Philip made a strict examination, and found this to be true. To force the door would be impossible; so though there was no immediate danger of his starving, there was just as small prospect of regaining his freedom. Perhaps a search would be instituted for him, he thought, and then said to himself there was no one besides Pierson who would undertake it, and he might look till Doomsday, and never hit on the truth.

"Sorely," added Sir Charles, "they will let you out! Jasper Ruthven can have no motive for keeping you here, unless," his brow clouding, "he would fear to trust you with his secret."

"You may depend upon it I shall not submit quietly," said Philip, pacing up and down in his excitement; "if other means fail I must attack Hermann when he comes next, and trust to my skill for overpowering him."

"But he is a Hercules—you could not possibly cope with such strength!" observed the other, eyeing his companion's slight, but athletic form doubtfully. "You look vigorous, certainly, but he would master you in a few minutes."

"Would he? Time must prove. Do you think"—passionately—"I will be caught like a rat in a trap, and spend my existence, as you have spent the best part of yours, in this subterranean dungeon? I am young, and life is sweet to me, but, for all that, I would rather die fifty deaths than submit to such a fate!"

Something of his impetuosity communicated itself to Ruthven. For a moment his eyes flashed, and he drew himself up with an answering enthusiasm; then it died away, and he shook his head.

"That is how I should have spoken years ago, but now all energy has left me, and I am so used to captivity that I hardly wish for



[THE MYSTERY OF HEATHCLIFF.]

freedom. I am constantly provided with fresh books and papers; so, after all, I am not worse off than many students, who voluntarily immerse themselves. You think my words strange—you don't believe me—perhaps you despise me for this confession?"

Philip did neither. He was thinking of the sentences Byron has put into the mouth of Chillon's lonely captive, Bonivard:—

"It was, at length, the same to me,  
Pettered or fetterless to be,  
I learned to love despair,  
And thus, when they appeared at last,  
And all my bonds aside were cast,  
These heavy walls to me had grown  
A hermitage—and all my own!  
... My very chains and I grew friends,  
So much a long communion tends  
To make us what we are—even I  
Regained my freedom with a sigh!"

"Will you describe how this place is situated?" he asked, presently, after a little thought.

"It is underneath the cliffs, and close to the sea," Sir Charles answered; "and a door leads into a large cave, which, it seems, Hermann and a companion of his once used for smuggling purposes. They were then unaware of these two inner caves, whose existence Jasper Ruthven himself discovered through some old deeds belonging to the house when it was a Priory, and it was not till some little time after my fall that I was brought here."

"Where were you at first, then?"

"In the outer cave, the entrance to which is so skilfully concealed in the rocks that it would be a marvel if it were discovered by anyone not knowing the secret of it."

"And," continued Philip, "did you fall over the cliffs accidentally?"

"I will tell you exactly how it all happened," said Sir Charles, "and then, if you do regain your freedom, you can let the world know the truth. To begin, then, at the beginning, you must know that I was married, but to a woman who was very much my inferior in station, and, at her own wish, I kept the

marriage a secret from my father, who was a very proud man, and would have been terribly enraged at my *mesalliance*. However, I saw my wife frequently, and only awaited an opportunity of openly acknowledging her, for she was sweet and fair enough to have adorned even the most exalted rank. We had one child, a son.

"Well, close to Heathcliff there lived a man called Darrell, who was a great friend of mine, and to whose wife I one day confided my secret. She was one of the purest and kindest women in the world, and we had been very intimate since our earliest childhood, so naturally we kept up our friendship; and it seemed her husband grew jealous, instigated, I verily believe, by my cousin Jasper's hints and innuendos. About five years after my marriage my father died, and as soon as the numerous duties that devolved upon me in looking after his funeral and arranging matters in general were completed, I resolved to bring my wife home and introduce her as Lady Ruthven; and the night before I intended fetching her I rode over to the Grange and asked Mrs. Darrell if she would come to my house and welcome her, which she promised to do.

"I then returned home, but just as I reached the cliff I was overtaken by Eustace Darrell, who had heard of my visit and long interview with his wife, and was boiling over with a rage that made him actually beside himself. He accused me of trying to steal his wife's heart from him, and would not listen to my denial. Finally he struck me, and, unfortunately, I was so near the edge that I fell over the cliff, and of course lost consciousness. From what I have since learned from Hermann, it seems he must have been near at the time, and my cousin Jasper actually witnessed the quarrel; and after persuading Darrell to go home, went down to the beach and took up my body, really believing that I was dead. The German suggested my being

carried to the cave; and then it became clear that I was only senseless, so restoratives were applied, and I at length regained consciousness, but could not move, as my side was paralysed.

"Then the scheme of taking my place and becoming master of the Priory must have suggested itself to Jasper; for, instead of having me taken home he kept me at the cave with Hermann—who it happened knew something of medicine, to attend to me; and some time afterwards, when he had discovered the passage from the Priory down to the cells, I was removed here, and the German brought the furniture piece by piece during the night time. Before this Jasper had found out by means of papers that were in my pockets, the facts of my marriage and the birth of my son, but fortunately I had hidden the proofs away in a little hollow in the chimney-piece of my bedroom, so I was in no fear of his obtaining possession of them.

"However, not long after my imprisonment, he brought me a local newspaper which contained an account of an inquest that had been held on the body of my wife, who had died from heart disease, consequent, so he told me, on seeing the announcement of my death in a newspaper, and he also informed me that Philip, my little boy, was dead too."

He paused for a moment, and put his hand to his eyes, and Philip bent forward, actually trembling with excitement.

"The name of your wife was Grace Seaforth, but she was called Greville, and she lived at Llantressan in Wales. Is it not so?" he exclaimed, breathing quickly.

Sir Charles looked up surprised.

"It is. How did you know it?"

"Because I at last possess the key to all that I have longed to know. Jasper Ruthven told you a lie when he said your son Philip Greville was dead; he lives and stands before you now!"

(To be continued.)





[IN DEADLIEST PERIL.]

NOVELLETTE.]

## MAB'S GUARDIAN.

## CHAPTER I.

## A HASTY PROMISE.

"MAB, where are you? Come, don't keep a fellow racing about with the glass at eighty in the shade!"

"There he is, I declare, hunting everywhere but in the right place! Now to punish him for not coming out before!" murmured a little pink-clad maiden, as she peeped from her leafy bower, where she had seated herself on the topmost bough of a fine old apple-tree that was laden and bearing down with luscious brown ribbons. "Oh, what fun! There he goes! now into the arbour, then the stable; and if he isn't actually peeping into Lion's kennel!" and she laughed mischievously, and munched the most tempting pippins, and swung herself to and fro, thoroughly delighted at the perplexity of Raymond Vincent, who kept calling out at the top of his voice,—

"Mab, I say, where are you? If you are playing hide-and-seek with me you'll be sorry, for I've got some news—strange news for you!"

This was too much for the young lady's peace of mind, for curiosity occupied a large share in the nature of Mab Vincent; so by way of answer she aimed very accurately a large apple, which alighted right on the tip of her searcher's nose.

"By Jove! that's a stinger!" he exclaimed. "Wait till I do catch you!"

"And what would you do with me, Mr. Impudence!" said a clear, ringing voice just above his head, as another missile came pelting down on his defenceless head.

And looking up he saw a vision of fair girlish beauty gazing down with a world of innocent mischief lurking in her saucy dimples. Her rosebud mouth parted, her eyes dancing with mirth at the sufferer below.

"Kiss you a thousand times when I catch you!"

"Well, then, I shall have my revenge on you first, and pelt you till you are black and blue! Here are some beautiful bullets, Master Ray. Now what is it to be, peace or war?"

"Peace, queenie! You carry too many guns for me!" he said, coaxingly.

"Only on conditions that you tell me the news, then!"

"How can I shout up so high? Come down, there's a dear Mab," he replied.

"But is the news about you, or me, or aunty?"

"It is about yourself, and your guardian Mr. Lorraine!"

"Oh, then I'll come! But just take a turn in the other direction, because, you see, you will impede my descent!" she said, laughing, as she tucked the dainty pink zephyr skirts around her pretty, slim ankles, and prepared to leave her leafy perch.

"Here I am! Now for the news, Raymond!"

"I thought you would come, Mab, when you heard about the ogre!"

"Come, don't keep me in suspense," she said, coaxingly; "it isn't kind; and you know you promised if I came down you would tell me, so now keep your word, or I'll run up my tree again and pelt you till you are black and blue!"

"Well, I won't keep you in suspense any longer, queenie. The mater has had a letter from Mr. Lorraine to say he is coming to fetch you on Thursday away from the old home."

"Oh, Ray! it isn't true!" gasped poor little Mab, now thoroughly sobered, her little quivering lips no longer full of sweet mischief.

"Yes, darling, it is; but why need it alarm you so? Come, be brave, he won't dare be unkind to you! I wish now I had not told you; perhaps the mater wouldn't have upset you at all like I have," he said, concernedly.

The brave little woman tried now to hide her alarm, and said, softly,—

"I am glad you have come to tell me, dear

Ray; I can bear it better, I know; but is he going to take me away from here, and shan't I see you, and aunty, and Lion, and—"

But here the dismal thought was too much for Mab, and she cast down her eyes that he should not see the pearly tears that would come in spite of all into her glorious violet eyes.

"That's what he is coming for, dear; but you will be rich, and live in a grand house, and be a great lady, and have horses and carriages, and all that kind of thing, you know."

And here it must be confessed that he looked very doleful.

"Oh! dear, Ray, is it real? Is it possible that this ogre will force me to go and live with him? I pity him, then, the nasty old thing; won't I lead him a dance, that's all! I'll be so contrary that he will be thankful to send me back, I can tell you. I'm a regular Tartar when I like, ain't I?"

"Well, yes, queenie, I think he will find his match in you, but perhaps he's not so grim a personage after all. Suppose we take a stroll, and talk of something nicer, as in two days you are likely to leave poor mater and I," he said, sadly, for it dawned upon his young mind that his home would no longer be to him what it was when the fair girl at his side was gone from its old-fashioned thatched roof.

It was a pretty English scene this, in the soft, September gloaming, and Mab walked by his side in silence, her eyes drinking in the old familiar objects that met her gaze at every turn; and it seemed that she had never seen or enjoyed the intense beauties of everything till now that her time had arrived to leave it.

It was a glorious season, full of placid sweetness. The rankness of late summer was passed, and the sadness of autumn was to come, and everything was soft, soothing, and serene, with neither regret nor foreboding to subdue its brightness or sadden its beauty. Even the stubble-fields glowed with a radiance that was almost as golden as the departed

glory of the harvest, and the woods waved greenly still, unconscious of the "fiery finger" that would touch them ere long.

She had never been so keenly alive to the varied loveliness of her west-country home till now. She had thought she appreciated its brightness, its clear sunshine and elasticity, roaming about with this boy lover, daring him to climb steep ascents and gigantic trees to procure her birds' nests and rare specimens of wild flowers, never brooding or thinking of the future, always dreaming or sportive, as the fit took her.

They had arrived now at the fresh, crisp sea, which rolled lazily at their feet in little green and white waves, and the grand Atlantic lay stretched before them and thousands of miles of sea and sky between where they stood and any other shore.

Her light pink robe fluttered in the fresh breeze, and her whole being seemed absorbed in the one sad thought that she was about to leave it all, with a stranger whom she could never remember even having seen.

"A penny for your thoughts, queenie," said Raymond, yearning to see the dimpling smiles return to the sweet face that he never remembered seeing clouded for two minutes together.

"I was thinking how hard it will be to part from all this, Ray. I never knew how happy I was here till now," this with a little sigh.

"Dear little Mab, your words do make me so deliciously joyful!"

"What a nasty, disagreeable boy it is. I do believe you are delighted I am going."

"No, Mab, that is not the reason. Shall I tell you why your words make me the happiest fellow in the world?"

"If you like," she said, shyly.

"Because they tell me that we are dear to you—that you will miss me, your old playfellow, and that, perhaps, at times you will wish I was near you. Come, tell me, queenie, if I am right?"

"Well, yes, Ray, that is quite right. I shall never forget you or dear Aunt Jane; and I know I shall never be happy again. But don't you think this ought to let you come too?" she asked, demurely.

This was too much for Raymond Vincent, and he fairly burst out into a merry laugh at the thought of this stern guardian permitting a playfellow measuring six feet two in his boots for the amusement of his ward.

"I cannot see anything to laugh at, Mr. Impudence!" she said, artlessly.

"Pray forgive me, Mab, but really I could not help it. It struck me so comical, feeling as I do towards you. Why, do you know that I should be the last person in the world he would select as your companion and playmate?"

"For what reason, Ray?"

"Because I love you. There now, it's out, my sweet little queenie."

"That's no news," she said, laughing; "why of course you do; I have always known that."

A shade of disappointment passed over his handsome young face as he noticed her sweet face turned up to his, but with no telltale blush or downcast eyes to denote that his words had taken root in her maidenly heart.

"But there is another love, different to all other, that I feel for you, darling," he said softly, taking one of her little sunburnt hands in his, and looking at it fondly; "a love that only two souls can feel, a love that never perishes, but lives immortal, for it never dies and can never be quenched as long as life lasts."

"Don't talk so strange, you frighten me," she said, as her eyes caught the gleam of his passionate glances fixed upon her in a way she had never experienced before, and which sent a nervous thrill through her frame instead of an answering expression of shy, sweet reciprocity that struck a chill to his heart; and she said, somewhat sadly,

"I did not mean to frighten you, darling Mab, but to tell you that you are so dear to me that if I thought you did not care for me, and that I should never be able to win you

for my very own, my sweet little wife, I would plunge in there" (this as he pointed to the broad expanse of smiling ocean), "and hide my head down in its stilly depths till the burden of life was shaken off."

"Oh, dear Ray, you must not say such things; I never knew you cared for me like that. I thought you loved me like a dear little sister, and that perhaps you would almost be glad to get rid of me."

"Oh Heaven," he murmured, "how I wish I did!" he said aloud, "cannot you look upon me in any other light than a brother? Have I disguised my feelings so well these two years that no answering chord is struck down deep in your heart, Mab?"

"Oh, yes, dear Ray; I love you more than anything here, but—"

"You know not what it is to picture me as one who would never be from your side—one dearer than father, mother, or brother; eh, little innocent?"

"Yes, I have, because I want to be always with you. Did I not say just now that I would like you to come to London with the oge and myself?"

"But then it will not be fair a shilling," he said, moodily, as he thought how difficult it was to kindle a flame in this cool, pure nature that was as innocent and fresh as a lily just opening into bloom, on a dowy June morning, but which he felt would show and pulsate with thrilling ecstasy when once it felt the subtle influence of passion's fiery wave; and he had hoped to kindle the spark by the force of his own wealth of love before she left him to enter a strange world where suitors would be many to worship, and no fair a shilling.

"I want you to love me as a husband, a lover, not only as a playmate, and to love no other; while I would worship you as woman was never worshipped before. Do you think it possible that you could Mab? Years may pass away before I dare claim you from your guardian; but all I want is your assurance that you would look upon me in that light, not as you hitherto have done."

He waited patiently for her answer with bated breath, for this fair fragile girl of seventeen had wound herself around his heart-strings and become dearer to him than life; and he woke up to the knowledge, this calm autumn evening, what life would be worth when she had left the old homestead, unless he could gain her maidenly heart, and win the priceless treasure of her love.

At last the words came clear and distinct, and she replied,—

"I do love you, dear Raymond, and will be your little wife, if that will comfort you, and make you happy."

He did not stop to observe that the fair young face was perfectly calm, and that the eyes never flinched from his ardent gaze, or that the girlish form never trembled, or shyly shrank from his embrace, with coy, sweet consciousness; he only knew that Mab, his lovely Mab, was his to love, and devote his life to.

"Oh, my sweet darling little Mab," he exclaimed, as he caught the dear little head cowering with rippling curls in his strong arms, and imprisoned its owner, as he rained down love's first kiss on the rosebud-pouting lips, and the long, purple-fringed eyelids, till she was fain to cry for freedom.

"You naughty boy," she said, "to be so rude and unkind!" as she endeavored to pat down her silky hair, and straighten her cambric gown, which must be confessed was none the better for her lover's beard-like embrace. "Whatever will aunt say if she sees me like this, Ray?"

"Say, sweet one, why that you are the dearest little pet in the world; and that she will love you more and more for making her big son so happy, and because some day you will be her daughter as well as niece."

The shades of evening were now gathering fast, and the lovers sauntered along, his arm clasping her fairy-waist as he conjured up their future, with the light of a great joy in

his eyes, she listening to him with a far-away look in hers, that spoke more eloquently than words that her soul was not touched, although she felt quite calm and happy with this young Antinous who towered like one of the Greek gods above her head, and her thoughts ran thus as she neared their home.

"Is this love that I have read about so often that I feel? If so it's very calm and quiet. I have no strange feeling like they write about. I only feel happy, restful, and dear Ray will one day come and claim me for his wife, and then we shall always be together like this for ever till we die. It all seems very nice, and he loves me. How happy he seems. Why don't I? Because I always was wilful, and always shall be, I suppose. But how nice it is to know he loves me, and that I have made him so by only saying yes."

And her soliloquy was broken now, for they were on the threshold nearly of the Chestnuts, as the pretty, quaint house, with its many gables, was styled; and at the rose-covered porch stood a tall, slight figured lady, with a sweet face that had defied the hand of Time to rob it of its soft outlines or mar its beauty, and as she waited for the lovers any observer could perceive the striking likeness to her son.

"Where have you been, waster? Tea has been waiting ever so long," she said, as they came down the garden path, the trim edge of which was full of sweet odours from the profusion of old-fashioned flowers that grew without culture from season to season, as can only be found in such spots as this, where beds dotted with blazing geraniums are not considered the correct thing, or grass-mown lawns close to the earth necessary.

Here everything was wild, luxuriant, and sweet. Turf that one's feet sank into, with the starry daisies rearing their snowy heads to the heavens, drinking in sunshine and dew alike, mignonette, stocks, verbenas, and "sweet Willies," heliotrope, jasmine, lavender, and rosemary were mixed up in one delightful pot pourri of delicious perfume that delighted the senses and calmed and rested tired nature.

Mab ran and kissed her aunt fondly, as she said,—

"Raymond and I have been down to the sea to talk over my going away. Oh, aunt, dear! I can nothing be done? must I go? I am so happy with you, and the thought makes me very miserable."

"So it has me, dear child, but I can do nothing. You know it was the will of your poor dear papa that you should leave my charge when you had attained seventeen, and be entirely under the guardianship of Mr. Lorraine, who, I believe, is thoroughly worthy of the great trust placed by my poor brother on his deathbed. Besides, you see, dearest, you are an heiress, and he has the direction of your property, the same as if he were your own father."

"Oh dear! oh dear! it's all very right and proper, I dare say, and I ought to be obedient and good, but I am sure I am very happy here, and quite able to look after myself; and as for the money he may keep it if he will only let me remain with you in peace. Come, aunt, darling, write and tell him so. If he's fond of money he might accept the offer, for he won't find it a pleasure to have me live with him, I can tell him."

Mrs. Vincent could not refrain from smiling, though her heart was very sore at the thought of the speedy parting with her pet, and at her innocent, guileless prattle, and she said,—

"My darling Mab, Mr. Lorraine is a gentleman, and dare not in honour give up his trust, much as he might desire to. But now we must go into tea and discuss Mary's values, or they will get cold, and then she will be angry with us all. Come, Raymond, let's make haste; but how silent you are, what is the matter—grieving already at the thought of losing your sweet little coz, eh?"

"No, dearest mother," he said, affectionately, as he placed her arm around her



waist. "I was wondering what you would say when I told you that Mab had promised to be my wife."

"That you are both too young, my dear children, to enter into any such engagement. She has never seen any gentleman but yourself, the rector, and Doctor Whitely. She must go out into the world, dear boy, before I could sanction any binding engagement."

"But she loves me," said poor Raymond, in a doleful tone, as he saw all his little air-castles shattered by the calm word of reason, "and I worship the very ground she walks on. I would strive and use every nerve to become wealthy and worthy of her; I would make her so happy, indeed, I would!"

"Yes, that is all very true, dear; but you have both forgotten one most important person whose consent must be obtained. You seemed to have quite overlooked Mab's guardian."

"Surely, dear mother, he would never refuse us, if it is for queenie's happiness?"

"I know not what he may do," she said, somewhat troubled at the turn affairs were taking. "It is better, dear Raymond, not to bind our darling by any promise; that is all I ask. She must be free!"

"But I will not, aunty dear. I am quite determined to die an old maid, if the ogre won't let us marry, so I shall not take my freedom, that I am determined!" and her eyes flashed at the idea of thwarting this stranger, who had come down upon her life like a bombshell to destroy her sweet, calm existence.

The tea-table at the Chestnuts was a rather slow affair. No one seemed inclined to talk. Each was absorbed in thought on this bright, starlight evening; their usual music was abandoned, and all retired to rest earlier than usual, but not to sleep. Too many sad memories disturbed Mrs. Vincent of the past, when her handsome brother led to the altar a fair girl, the exact counterpart of Mab, amid the hearty good wishes of rich and poor alike; and how, in one year, that treasured young wife was laid in the village churchyard, and her bridal wreath placed with loving hands on her coffin; and then, the dumb despair of her lover husband, and the piteous cries from the motherless infant she had left. Then her thoughts turned upon her own wedded life, and early bereavement of her noble husband, who went out one morning full of health and vigour, to superintend the building of his new schools, and in two hours was brought home lifeless—a martyr to his over zealousness. A false step on the high parapet, and a bright life was hurled into eternity to meet that great Creator, whom, as his minister, he had served so faithfully.

And Mab sat on in the sweet stillness of the night, drumming the window-pane with her rosy fingers mechanically, as she thought how soon all this would end, and wondering what kind of old tramp, as she styled her guardian, was about to come.

"At all events, he will not find me very docile, I fear!" she murmured, "especially if he thwarts my wishes. But there is one blessing; I shall be very rich when I am twenty-one, and he will then have no more control over me; so should he be brave enough to refuse his consent to Ray's and my engagement, we must wait till then. Poor dear Ray, he says he loves me so much that he would rather die than lose me for his wife. How strange, I love him; but I don't feel like that. I love to be with him fishing and singing and teasing him; but I could go on for ever like that. I am sure it won't be half so nice when he's my husband. There, it's all right, I suppose, but very different from what the novels tell me; but I must get to bed, or I shall lose my beauty sleep; that dear aunty is always reminding me of."

And in a few minutes Mab's little chestnut, curly head lay snugly between her snowy faced sheets and pillows, her hands crossed on her fair bosom which rose and fell regularly, bespeaking the rest to the angels who watched

around her couch that the innocent, bright, young spirit was in their especial keeping.

## CHAPTER II.

### LOVE'S DAYS.

The eventful day arrived, and with it Mr. Lorraine, Mab's guardian. Mrs. Vincent received him with her accustomed dignified courtesy; and, lo! in a few minutes Mab was sent for.

How her heart fluttered and pulse quickened as she approached the drawing-room, where she could catch the deep, musical tones of this ogre, who had come to steal her away from her simple home among the flowers!

A tall form came forward and took both her hands, and his eyes gazed earnestly in the young, shy face curiously, and the same deep tones said:

"So this is my ward, Miss Mabel Vincent. I sincerely trust, dear child, that I am as welcome to you as you are to me, and that we shall become true friends."

She ventured to look up at the tall commanding stature of this grand specimen of manhood, who had spoken such kind words of greeting, and blushed furiously as she thought:

"Only fancy me calling him an ogre and a bear! Oh! I should die of shame if I thought he would ever hear of it!" but seeing the necessity of replying, she stammered, "I hope so, sir; I will try to be as least troublesome as I can."

He could not refrain from smiling at her artless reply, and said, with a mischievous twinkle in his dark eyes playing around his finely cut mouth:

"Never fear that you will ever trouble me, Miss Mabel; that would be impossible. So sweet a flower will be cherished for your father's, my dear old friend Vincent's, sake first, and your own too; my home is very dull, and needs the sunshine badly," and a sad pained look came into his eyes as he spoke of his home that went straight to Mab's heart; and she mentally resolved to try and do her best to make her guardian happy as far as lay in her power.

"Ray, where are you?" cried a voice all over the orchard and garden, when she had escaped from the drawing-room; "do not be unkind, but let me know where you are!"

"Oh! here I am," said a glum voice from a clump of trees; "you seem particularly cheerful now that you are leaving us," and Raymond came out of his shady corner where he had concealed himself disconsolately, determined not to be anywhere near the house ready to welcome Mr. Lorraine, whom he looked upon now as a kind of daylight robber, come to steal the one great treasure the Chestnuts contained.

"So I am, Ray, I'm as happy as a queen," she said, laughing joyously as her lover stood before her in the glorious autumn sunshine, looking as fierce as it was possible so frank and noble a face could, as he gazed his tawny moustache.

"You are certainly not very flattering, Miss Vincent," he said, cuttingly.

"Miss Vincent, indeed!" she said, with a little pout; "you are a nasty, disagreeable old goose, and don't care a bit for me, or you'd be only too pleased to see me happy."

"Come, forgive me, darling little queenie," he said, as he drew the little fatty form to his heart, and looked into the sweet face that seemed so doubly precious on this day of all others when they were to part. "I have been very unhappy thinking of it all, you know, darling, but what is he like?"

"Oh! he's very nice and speaks so kind, and I like him very much," she replied, all in one breath; "that is what I am so happy about, because I thought he was one of those old sour-faced, cross patches, that would speak stern, and look at you as if he could eat you. Instead of that he's rather nice-looking, and not old at all. Isn't that enough to make one happy, dear Ray?"

"Of course it is, and I am a cross-grained idiot; but it all seems wrong with me somehow, this stranger taking you away from dear mater and I. But you will stick to your word, Mab, and never desert me, whatever influences are put upon you. Remember, you are my plighted wife, and no other man must dare approach you with words of love. Promise me my own dear Mab!"

"I do, Ray. Why, of course, I shall be true. Did I not say so the other evening to aunty even?" she said, fearlessly looking into his face with unconscious innocence.

For the poor artless child thoroughly believed that it would be impossible to break her vow, or to know any feeling beyond the quiet sisterly one she had for Raymond, this handsome cousin of hers, and had unbounded faith in her own strength.

But her words and renewed promises brought the old cheerful look into his eyes, and he was satisfied; and she wandered by his side through the old orchard with its purple and yellow plums hanging temptingly over their heads as they daintily strayed from their leafy home to bask in the rays of the sun.

Words of undying love and constancy were exchanged before they joined their elders; and Raymond had recovered his wonted spirits, because he felt sure of the love of his darling Mab, and of their future happiness.

Before the grey shades of evening closed in Mab was on her way to the great metropolis, seated in a first-class carriage, opposite this new guardian of hers; he absorbed in his evening paper, she looking out wistfully at the fields and leafy orchards, and quaint old farmsteads and rustic cottages, as the train dashed on madly, shrieking weirdly as it whirled past station after station, drowning the little voices of the children, who cheered the steam fiend on its course.

The magazines lay neglected in her lap, for poor Mab was thinking of the dear old home and the sad faces she had left behind, and wondering when she would return to them, and what her life would be like with this silent, proud man, who, after attending to her comfort, settled himself down to his paper, seemingly oblivious of her presence.

At last her reverie was broken by Mr. Lorraine saying—

"This is where we stop for a few minutes, my dear! Shall I get you some sherry or coffee, or would you like to come out?"

She started at the sound of his voice, which had a wonderful magic in its soft, yet commanding ring that seemed to send a thrill of pleasure and confidence through her frame, and said:

"I would like to come out, please!" and taking her with tender care, as if she were a child, he lifted her out on to the platform, and placed the little grey-gloved hand in his arm and took her to the refreshment-room.

How strange it all seemed, and yet there was a subtle fascination in it; and as she sat and sipped her sherry, and nibbled her biscuit, she wondered why this godlike man was alone in the world, with no wife or loving children to brighten his life and home; for something told her his was a nature that hungered for sympathy and home ties. She longed to show her gratitude to him for his kindness, and be to him an affectionate daughter.

Now the dark night clouds had set in, and Mab still sat curled up in her corner like a little mouse, trying to look at the dark, gloomy landscape, till at last the fields were left behind, and bricks and mortar reigned supreme, accompanied by a fusty smell like stale rum and dirty pudding-cloths stewed up together, and they steamed into Paddington station amid the roar of a teeming city.

In a few minutes she was seated in a handsome carriage, her modest little trunks carefully placed by the side of the coachman, and Mab was in London for the first time in her life.

At last they stopped at a fine palatial house in Kensington, and Mab was handed out and

taken up the wide flight of steps into the chaste, lighted hall, where a lady stood to receive them, saying,—

"So this is your ward, Mary?"

"Yes, dear mother; and I fear she is somewhat tired; the train was rather late."

And Mab found herself clasped in the arms of Mrs. Lorraine; and then a low, sweet voice, the fac-simile of her son's, only weaker, said,—

"Welcome, dear, to your new home, where I trust you may be very happy!"

"I know I shall," Mab replied, as she kissed the gentle lady affectionately.

In a brief while Mab was seated in a pretty chamber, all cream-coloured hints and forget-me-nots and satinwood furniture; everything bespoke loving hands, from the delicate draped bed, with its dainty bows of cream and blue ribbon, to the couch that stood temptingly under the bow window, downy and puffy, with a little writing-table by its side, furnished completely with every necessary.

"How kind you are to me," said Mab, "and I a perfect stranger!" as she sat down opposite Mrs. Lorraine, drinking her tea and looking admiringly at the sweet woman with her dark eyes like those of her son, and which were still lustrous, contrasting with the soft, white hair, her delicate hands, that gleamed with the flash of priceless jewels at the slight figure in its robe of pearl grey satin and its priceless lace-draped shoulders. She seemed to Mab like a gentle spirit floating in the soft twilight between life and death, and making both beautiful.

"I could not do anything but be kind to you, dear," she replied, "because you must be dear to me, if only for the sake of your dear father!"

"Did you know him?" Mab said, softly.

"Yes, dear; well."

"Poor, dear papa! I never remember even seeing him! Was he like me; aunt says he was?"

"Well, yes, you have his mouth and eyes; but we had better join Mr. Lorraine now, dear, if you feel quite refreshed, and I know supper must be near at hand, and you nearly starved,"—this hurriedly, as if the conversation pained her.

After supper Mab pleaded fatigue, and retired to rest, feeling sad and yet happy with her new friends and home, and her prayers now went up to the Father of all for these two tender natures who had, out of love to her father, taken her to their hearts and home.

When she had said her simple prayers and prepared to rest her mind wandered, until asleep overtook it, upon her guardian, and those wondrous, soul-speaking eyes, and they haunted her dreams.

### CHAPTER III.

#### WILL HE WIN?

THREE months have passed since Mab came to live in the mansion at Kensington to brighten the large, handsomely-furnished rooms with her fresh, young presence, her sweet soprano voice carolling merrily, enlivening the whole household, where she reigned queen; for there was not a domestic, from the portly butler down to the scullery-maid, that was not her loyal and devoted subject.

There was but one thorn in her rosy existence, and that was the cold manners of her guardian, who seemed to take scarcely any interest in his beautiful ward, invariably spending his days alone in his library or his club, not returning till Mab and his mother had retired for the night.

"I fear he thinks I am a great bother," she murmured one fine winter morning, as she watched him mount his thoroughbred horse and canter away towards the park. "He never asks me to accompany him. I wonder why he likes to be so much alone, he that is fit to be a king. Perhaps he doesn't like girls; I wish I was older and—taller, like Lady Alice Chester, and could wear a train, and switch it round me with her grace. I see it

all; he despises me, thinks me a little country hoyden that can't even use her fan like these elegant peacocks of fashion. Oh, dear!" and she gave a little impatient sigh, as she conjured up the grace and fascination of manners and deportment of some of the London flowers of society who visited Mrs. Lorraine.

"Well, my child, in a brown study?" said a gentle voice. "What is my little pet thinking about?"

"I was thinking, dear Mrs. Lorraine, that I am not half so nice as I should like to be, and that my guardian finds me noisy and troublesome, and that, perhaps, he would like me better if I was more formal, and quiet, and dignified, like other young ladies," she said, wistfully.

"What has got into the dear child's head?" replied Mrs. Lorraine, smiling affectionately at the sweet little face framed in its rich, bronzed-hued hair, that glinted in the pale winter sunshine like waves of deep molten gold flecked with amber. "Why, my dear, you are simply perfect as you are. We would not have you different to your sweet little self for the world."

"That is only your opinion of me, you know," said Mab, as she kissed the kind, gentle face of her friend. "You spoil me, make me vain; but Mr. Lorraine does not see me with your eyes. Why, last night he sat by the side of Lady Alice listening to her singing, and turned over her leaves for nearly an hour, and talked to her about his travels, but he never does me."

"My dear, do not let such thoughts trouble that little head of yours; no one likes you in this house dearer than your guardian; but his is a quiet nature, not given to express his true feelings; they lie deep down. Not even I have ever been able to delve his motives or his thoughts, which, though silent, are noble and generous to a fault; but, come, dear Mab, it is time we took our accustomed drive."

As Mab sat in the handsomely-appointed carriage muffled up in furs, the rich seal-brown plume of feathers shading her mignon face, many were the curious eyes bent upon her as they drove through the park, where they met Lorraine cantering beside a young guardsman.

A rosy flushed mantled Mab's face, and her eyes lowered as she recognised her guardian, who made his way towards them, accompanied by his companion, whom he introduced as Captain Treherne.

"What a divine creature, Lorraine! Why, she's positively enchanting!" said the gallant captain, when they had paid their devoirs to the ladies. "Sly dog, never to tell a fellow of this sweet addition to your household. Is she any relative? Pardon my curiosity, but I never knew you had any on the female side."

"She is my ward, Treherne; but I have an appointment, so must leave you at once. I am late now!" this impatiently, as a look of annoyance passed over his fine, chiselled features, as if the subject was not a pleasant one.

"I won't detain you, then, Lorraine, but will call and pay my respects to the ladies this evening; so *au revoir*, dear boy!"

"Am I mad?" muttered Lorraine, as he turned his horse's head towards Kensington-gardens. "Oh, merciful Heaven, give me strength to battle against this fast-growing passion that is raging within me, and which will consume my very reason—ah, and even honour, unless Thou givest me strength! Would that I had never seen thy sweet face, Mab, my darling! Oh, why do you haunt my dreams by night, and torture my soul by day, with those dear eyes that look at times as if they yearned for one look of love that I dare not give? Oh, merciful Heaven, do not let my burden be too great!"

His emotion was so strong that large beads of perspiration came on his brow, and he rode on; his intelligent steed going at a steady pace as if conscious that its master was in trouble, and, therefore, must take all responsibility upon its own shoulders.

He was at last aroused by the faithful creature stopping short; and looking up he

found himself opposite his own house, and Mab gazing earnestly down at him from the verandah, where she was busily employed watering her favourite flowers.

"Poor old Saladin, so you brought me home whether I would or not!" he said, as he patted its glossy back gently, and then dismounted, throwing the reins to a groom and entering the house.

"May I come in, ladies?" he said, as he entered his mother's boudoir a few minutes after.

"Certainly, Harry," replied Mrs. Lorraine. "We shall only be too pleased to welcome you in our sanctum; won't we, Mab, dear? But who was that nice-looking man you introduced to us in the park? I have been puzzling my head, wondering if he is of the family of Treherne down in Cornwall. He is certainly a very handsome man!"

"Well, yes, he's not bad looking, my dear mother; but he's a rather loose young fellow, I fear, and belongs to the Treherne of Ravenswood Chase, a fine old county family who came over with the conqueror, as they style the blood-thirsty usurper who carried all before him!" he said, indifferently.

"I think he was rather smitten with our little Mab, Harry," his mother said, innocently, quite regardless of the pained expression that came into his face as he said, in a peremptory tone,—

"Perfectly absurd! He would be insane to think of such a thing! Don't talk such nonsense—I beg your pardon, dear mother," he added, as he saw the surprised expression on her gentle face. "I mean that he is, and never will be, in a position to dream of my ward."

"But, my dear son, position does not prevent young people admiring each other!" she said, playfully, little dreaming that every word she uttered was a stab to her son's heart. "What do you say, Mab? Come, speak for yourself. Are you not tired of us prosy folk at times, and wishing to be among the flowers in your old home, and that handsome cousin of yours, whose portrait I see so placed that it is the first thing that meets your eyes in the morning and the last at night. Come, confess, little rogue."

"Indeed, I am very happy here," replied Mab, "and do not want anyone's society except yours and Mr. Lorraine's," blushing furiously, as she caught those wonderful eyes fixed searchingly upon her, as if he would read her innermost soul, and caused her young heart to palpitate with a subtle joy that she could not understand; and to hide her confusion she escaped from the room to attend to her birds.

As soon as they were alone the old lady said,—

"I am glad you have brought up the conversation about our Mab, for I am not quite happy upon her account. You see, dear Harry, I am not a cheerful enough companion for such a bright young nature, and you are so little in her society that I fear she may fret. Only this morning she was looking out of the window so wistfully when you started for your ride that it made me ponder seriously if we are doing everything to conduce to her comfort and happiness. I feel sure she was longing to be with you, riding off merrily to where others of her own age gather together. You will pardon my anxiety, won't you, Harry?"

"Yes, dear mother," he said, gently, as he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it as courteously as if she had been a queen. "I see that you are right and I wrong. She must not be left so much to her own resources. I must endeavour to make her life happier, poor child."

With this the conversation dropped, and Mrs. Lorraine was quite elated at having gained her point, and his promise to give them both a little more of his much-coveted society.

"I feel sure it will be better for him in the end," she thought, "and probably cure his misanthropical habits."

As soon as Mab escaped she went to attend



to her pets, and her little brain was actively trying to work out a problem that had puzzled her for some time.

"How like you I am, my pretty birds," she murmured, as she fed them. "You are always pleased to see me, an so am I my guardy, although I do stand a little in awe of him. He is so dignified, and sometimes looks almost stern. He is in my thoughts more than Ray; I suppose it is because I see so much of one and so little of the other. Ah! birdies mine, how true it is out of sight out of mind. I cannot understand my feelings, can you, eh, pretty little mites?"

She was so preoccupied with her maiden thoughts that she did not observe Mr. Loraine until he spoke to her; and so startled was she that he might have overheard her self-communings that she dropped her bowl of seed, and looked so confused that he said, smilingly,—

"Why, Mabel, I seemed to have terrified you. Let me assist you to gather up the seed. May I?"

"Yes," she stammered. "You are very kind. It was stupid of me to give way to nervousness. Do you like birds, Mr. Loraine?"

"Oh, yes, very much. I often take a peep in here on the sly, and I keep my study door open to listen to their songs. You must miss your country home very much; there is nothing in London except the parks, and birds are not to be met with there, except the homely sparrow, which seems ubiquitous. You must have felt lonely here, and it is very thoughtful of me to have forgotten that, but I will make some amends now. Would you like to visit the theatres and concerts? If so I shall be most happy to be your escort."

"Yes, I should!" she said, with animation that lit up her face and made her eyes dance—those eyes that had already pierced his heart through and through, haunting him night and day, until he was weary almost of battling against the love which had stolen into his heart and refused to be dislodged. "But will it not be taxing your kindness too much?"

"Not at all," he said, stooping down to gather up the food, glad of the excuse to hide his face from her lest she should see the flush of pleasure that came into it.

Not for worlds would he have had her known the state of his heart, because honour and principle were at stake, and he knew the penalty to him of letting his feelings have vent.

There was a secret in his life known only to himself and one other, which made it impossible for him to ever dare speak of love to this beautiful, artless girl, who, like a summer rose, was unfolding beauties that made her simply ravishing in his eyes.

He was *blasé*, having sipped of the sweets of life, and found them very bitter, like dead sea apples, that turned to ashes in the mouth, and he longed for the freshness and purity which Mab possessed. But vain hope that he should ever do this; although his love for her was terribly real, and as her guardian he could not betray the sacred trust which had been imposed upon him.

Their hands met as they collected the scattered seed, and each felt a thrill of pleasure at the mere contact; and it required all his powers of will and strong resolve to avoid pressing the rosy fingers to his lips, and avowing his passion.

"Thank you, Mr. Loraine," she said, shyly; "my little pets have been kept waiting because of my stupidity. Look at them fluttering about as if they had never seen me for days, and yet I am constantly visiting them. Is it not nice that even birds can show their love for us in this pretty way? Life is full of delights. I hope I shall never lose the power of enjoying such innocent pleasures as these."

"I should be sorry if you did, Mabel," he said, gravely; "life has not been all pleasure to me. Somehow I fail to enjoy many things which I once prized."

"I am so sorry for that," she said, looking into his face with her speaking eyes as she caressed a golden-plumaged snary that nestled

in her bosom. "You have been so much abroad, where it is hot and sultry."

"Yes, very sultry," he said, with a weary sigh, meaning more than his words implied; "but if the heart is happy it matters not under what clime we live. But there, fancy my discussing such a topic as hearts with you when I ought to be completing my treatise upon geology! I am afraid you would spoil me, for work if I spent too much time in your society."

"Oh, no; I wouldn't!" she said, archly. "I wish you would let me be useful; I can copy fairly, and could arrange your letters, or do anything else you would wish."

"Fancy my immuring you in my den when you ought to be at some pleasanter occupation!" he said, with a smile that seemed to her the sweetest she had ever seen on the face of any man. "No, no, Mabel! youth is the time for pleasure; work, care, and anxieties come all too soon, believe me; but I must go now to my club, but I shall meet you at dinner. Captain Treherne is to join us."

Such a look of pleasure came into her face as to cause him pain, because he inferred from it that she was glad of an opportunity of meeting the dashing guardaman whom she had seen in the park; and a pang of jealousy shot through his heart, and with an abrupt "good day" he left her.

"How strange he is," she murmured; "at one moment so kind and gentle, and the next almost stern and forbidding! I wonder if he has passed through some great trouble such as I have read of in novels? Perhaps he has been crossed in love! Pshaw!" (this with a little nod of decision) "that would be impossible, he is so handsome and winning! Why even when he looks stern I cannot help liking him better than cousin Ray when he's at his best! Of course, I shouldn't like him to know it; he might think it unmanly. I wish Captain Treherne wasn't coming to-night, because I wish for—I wish dear Mrs. Loraine and myself to be alone with him!"

Poor Mab! She could not analyze her feelings, or she must have known that love had stolen into her heart like it had his, and that unconsciously she was harbouring thoughts traitorous to Ray, to whom only a few short months back she had pledged her vows, and who would expect her to become his wife in time.

If she could only have seen the fierce conflict that was going on in the study between Loraine and his conscience she would have stood aghast, and wondered why it was he could be moved by such deep emotions—he who was usually so calm, and reserved, and grave even to a fault.

"I could almost curse the hour of my birth!" he exclaimed, bitterly. "Why did she and I ever meet? It was foolish of me ever to return to England to fulfil my duties of guardian when her aunt could have filled the post ever so much better than I. I must go away. Oh! that the bane of my life had passed out of it! If I were free to-morrow I would—no, even that would be a betrayal of my trust. Oh, heaven! am I never to know peace is my one rash act to be for ever my bitter punishment!"

Seating himself he took out a photo from a secret drawer, and looked with an expression of deep scorn at the lovely face it portrayed, hissing forth, as if the words came from between red hot bars,—

"Traitoress! you have spoilt my life, and shame deters me from seeking to free myself from you for ever. Ah! you smile on me as you did when first we met, and I mistook passion for the holy feeling of love, and now, when too late, the scales have dropped from my eyes, for I know you for what you are—unscrupulous, ambitious, and heartless; but why has love for another entered a seared heart like mine, that I thought was dead to all such feelings? Oh, my sweet, innocent Mabel! you must never know my secret or look upon the face of this beautiful serpent—this viper that I have warmed in my bosom

to strike its venomous fangs into my heart! Someday, when I have laid down the weary burden of life, perhaps I may tell all to my gentle mother, and she to you. Oh! the shame of it all! I wish I could hide my head in some corner of the world and wait for the last dread summons. Traitoress, I wish sometimes in my wrath that I could grind you under my heel as I do this image of yourself!"

And, sulking the action to the word he placed the portrait under his heel and reduced it to ruin, whilst into his face there came an expression of fierce hate, wrung from his very soul by her base ingratitude.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DOUBTS RESOLVED.

CAPTAIN TREHERNE, after his first visit to the Loraines, often dropped in upon the ladies, with whom he became a favourite because he brought acceptable presents of flowers, books, and music, and was ever ready to be their cavalier when Loraine could not, owing to his duties, which, though self-imposed, were not neglected, because in them he found distraction from gloomy thoughts.

Mab liked his society well enough, and played and sang to him, and chatted about the doings of society, in which she hoped some day to figure.

Unhappily for the gallant captain he fell in love with the beautiful girl, and hoped to win her hand.

Mrs. Loraine, with womanly keenness of perception, saw how matters lay, and did everything in her power to afford him every opportunity of enjoying Mab's society, little dreaming of the anguish her son was suffering because he dared not put his veto upon the captain's visits, lest he should incur the odium of being a tyrant to his word.

About this time the political horizon was fraught with danger, and at last the storm broke, and England found herself engaged in war.

"How dreadful it is, my dear, to think that nations cannot agree," said the old lady to Mab, as they sat over their five o'clock tea, discussing the event, which was then a general topic in most houses. "I hope Captain Treherne will not be ordered out, don't you?"

"Yes, we should miss him very much, he is always so nice and agreeable."

"And so ready to oblige, but apart from that he seems to have conceived a great liking for you, Mab. I don't wonder at that, you little rogue; why you have made even me fall in love with you!"

"Oh! Mrs. Loraine, I hope I have not made him think too much of me! I like him as a friend, that's all. Besides, he comes to see guardy, they are such friends, and of course when he is here he stays for music and, just to while away time pleasantly. I do not think he will miss us as we shall him, for he will have plenty of work to do. Men have the advantage of us there; all we can do is to sit at home and think, they go out into the world and act."

"What a dear little, clever philosopher it is," was the smiling reply. "So you think that the captain comes principally to enjoy my son's society? If so, he must often have been sorely disappointed. No, no, Mab! I am older than you, and no handsome, dashing guardaman ever comes to visit a house where there is youth and beauty, from platonic motives. I wish you could like him very much, dear; he would make an eligible suitor, and it would make me very happy to see you his wife. There, forgive my frankness and look into your own heart, Mab, and see if there is not lurking there some little love for our martial friend. Why, here he is; talk of angels and you hear the flutter of their wings."

"He's rather a substantial angel, dear," laughed Mab; "why, he's almost a giant, and sometimes I feel afraid of him."

The captain was announced, and looked

grayer than was his wont, as he saluted the ladies, and added,—

"I shall soon be compelled to bid you good-bye; my regiment is under orders, and will sail within the week for Egypt."

Although he was speaking to both, his eyes were fastened upon Mab, whose face was bent over the tea-tray, for the conversation that had just passed made her a little nervous lest she should be on the point of hearing a declaration of love from him, and have the painful duty forced upon her of refusing him.

"I am so sorry to hear such news, Captain Treherne," said Mrs. Lorraine, earnestly; "and I am sure our dear Mabel will also; won't you, darling?"

"Yes, oh! yes," was the soft response, as her hands fluttered among the pretty butterfly-painted cups; and the little rosy-tipped fingers, sparkling with gems, dispensed the tea and cake so deftly, and when she handed the fragrant beverage to him, how he longed to imprison the little hand, and place a circlet of diamonds upon one of the tiny fingers, as a sweet badge of his love and duty.

The old lady, when tea was over, made an excuse for leaving them, and exchanged an encouraging smile with the captain, who did not seem quite as much at his ease as usual, for he had come with the intention of speaking to Mabel's guardian about his lovely ward, who had taken his heart captive.

"And so, Miss Vincent, you really think you will miss such a worthless fellow as I?" he said, fidgeting on his chair, which seemed to be stuffed with thorns.

"Of course I shall," she said, demurely; "because you have been so kind to dear Mrs. Lorraine; and I—and I shall often think of you, Captain Treherne."

"That makes me very happy," he said, in a voice that trembled in spite of himself, for her words seemed to bid him hope, for he had learnt to love this sunny-haired maiden very dearly.

"Does it? Then I am glad a true friend is not easily forgotten, but I wish you were not going."

"Why?" he asked, eagerly.

"Because," she said, "in the first place, you will be exposed to danger, and, in the next, I had planned such delightful skating down at Dinglewood Park, and hoped you would be with us as arranged."

With a keen look of disappointment on his handsome face, upon which the bloom of early manhood still lingered, he said,—

"Are those the only reasons, Miss Vincent?"

"Oh! no," she replied, quickly, noting his expression; "of course there are others. My guardian will miss you sadly in many ways. What will he do? He will have no one to be his opponent at billiards, you know. I shall have to take your place till you return, which I trust will not be long."

"May I think of you as the dearest friend this earth contains for me?" he asked, hesitatingly; for, though he was as brave as a lion, he would rather have faced bristling cannon than do or say anything to offend this gentle girl.

"Oh! no, not as the dearest, because you must have others who have superior claims to mine on your friendship."

"You are mistaken in that, but when I return I shall tell you all that is in my heart. Miss Vincent, I may hope?"

"That you will return? Oh! yes, that is my most earnest wish. You have been so kind to Mrs. Lorraine and myself, and we can never forget you."

"Thank you," he said, with a little sigh, and stroking his tawny moustache nervously. "I must beg of you to excuse me; I wish to see Mr. Lorraine, who is at the club, I presume, and will call in to-morrow morning to say good-bye."

He held her hand in his much longer than the occasion seemed to require, and hastened away, lest, forgetting prudence, he should declare the love he felt so keenly, and spoil his

future chances. For he was not so blind as to be unable to perceive that her friendship for him had not ripened into a warmer feeling, and once having said no to his prayer, he could not bring himself to petition her a second time.

"What can he mean?" she thought. "I wonder why he looked so sad? Why, Ray took our leave-taking with much more song frolic than he. Are men so prone as to fall in love with every girl they meet? Perhaps my big ooz has been flirting desperately, while I have been away, just to keep his hand in, as he would tell me—the saucy fellow. Somehow, I feel that I would like to be with Mr. Lorraine and his dear mother always, not that I would forget darling aunt, or Ray. I don't feel a bit jealous of Ray, although he had the imprudence in his last letter to say that sweet Kate, my friend, had been a great deal at the Cheats since I left. I know why she goes—it's not all for aunt's sake. Oh! no, she likes my handsome ooz, because she told me so once. Now, if my guardy were to—but there, what am I saying! he is nothing to me but a second father, and looks upon me as a simple, little, country maiden. How could he do otherwise? He is so grand, and noble, and clever—and oh! so learned too. I took a peep into his study, and saw such queer books that I couldn't even read; and I felt just like Fatima in Bluebeard's chamber. And oh! wasn't I afraid, lest he should come in and catch me, as I was reading Moore's poems which lay open on his desk, and marked I have since learnt it off by heart, and remember every word; let me see—yes, the heading was,—

"THE LOVE THAT MURMURS" old song  
"The love that murmurs in my breast,  
And makes me shed the secret tear,  
Nor day nor night my heart has rest,  
For night and day her voice I hear."  
Oh! bird of love, with songs so dear,  
Make not my soul the nest of pain;  
Oh! let the wing which brought thee here,  
In pity wait thee hence again."

That's very beautiful; but oh, so sad," she soliloquised. "He must be in love with someone. I wonder if it is that haughty Alice Chester?"

And the mere thought brought an angry frown on her face, and caused her little hands to clench, as if she would like to do something unkind to somebody; no doubt, to the patrician Alice.

While she was musing she heard a well-known step that sent her little heart fluttering like a timid bird, for she knew that it was her guardian; and as soon as he had entered she gave him one swift side-glance of admiration, and said,—

"Captain Treherne must have missed you; he left here only about ten minutes ago, thinking he would find you at your club."

"Indeed! I heard he was about to join his regiment for active service. Are you not sorry, child, that he is going?"—this as he looked at her with earnest, questioning eyes; but hers met his fearlessly, as she replied,—

"Yes; he asked me—"

"What!" he exclaimed; oh! so sternly, that she almost jumped.

And then recollecting himself, he added,—

"Mabel, pardon my manner; but as your guardian, I wish to know if you have contracted any great liking for Captain Treherne, such as would give him the right to speak to you?"

Oh! how anxiously he awaited her answer, which meant much to him; for he could not bear the thought of giving her up to anyone else, although he despised himself for his selfishness, and had fought and was still fighting against this unhalloved feeling, which, like a canker-worm, threatened to gnaw and to undermine every principle of honour and prudence.

"He only asked me if he could think of me when he was away."

"Yes, yes—and you?"—this so eagerly. But

she began to think the Captain might have met him, and said something that had angered him; and she did not feel thankful to the gallant son of Mars for having put her guardian out, but saw he was waiting for an answer, and said, tremulously,—

"I—I said he—what could I say, not that he wasn't to think of me? Of course no one could prevent his doing that!"

"But, perhaps, you wish him to?"

"No, I like him as a friend, that's all. May I not have gentlemen friends! Is it wrong? If so I will never speak to him again!"

"What a dear, innocent child she is," he thought, as he listened to her heartless exculpation of herself, and he smiled at her naivete as he said,—

"No, there can be no harm in mere friendship. I am glad your heart has not been impressed, for, much as I like Treherne, I should not care for him in a certain way!"

"You are not angry with me?" she said timidly, looking into his grave, handsome face with her dove-like eyes that pleaded for his forbearance.

"Angry! No, it would be cruel of me were I to be so. Trust in me as you would have in your own dear father, had he been spared; that is all I ask!"

Oh, the hypocrisy of the human heart, and the wonderful power given to man to clothe his words in language, which hides from you his most secret thoughts! Think of her only as a father! Oh! no, that was not so! His feelings were deeper far than those evoked by parental love; and he knew it to his sorrow, and had to own the sad truth to himself hourly, with keen humiliation in that he, a strong man, should be led captive by this simple country maid, whose very artlessness constituted one of her chief charms, because he had been so storm-beaten on the sea of life, and wished for some haven of rest and peace which she alone seemed to have the power to guide him into. But yet it could not be. There was a fatal bar against which his hopes were shattered; and the thought of his helplessness maddened him, and filled his heart with black despair, which wrung his soul with keen anguish, although to the world he wore an impassioned mask.

What would society think of him, if they only knew his secret? He would be scorned for daring to fall in love with his own ward, knowing well that there were fetters which galled, which he could not free himself from; and daily he crushed down the traitorous love which only seemed to become stronger under his repression, and put forth fresh shoots and new buds, and defied his every effort to pluck them out.

"I wish for nothing more!" she said, with gentle earnestness. "I am only a girl, and need advice and aid; and you are so kind that it would be ungrateful of me to have any secrets from you."

But although she said this, and meant it, yet there was one secret she dare not tell him—how she hungered for the sound of his voice, and what joy she experienced when he was near her. Even his frown was more welcome than the smiles of others; and it troubled her somewhat to think that some day, perhaps all too soon, she would have to bid him good-bye and go to the home which Raymond had provided for her, and be his wife; never to see that grave, noble face again, because he had more than hinted he would go abroad and never return to England.

"Heaven grant, my child, that I shall prove worthy of your confidence!" he said, in a voice of deep emotion; and anxious to be alone with his own thoughts he hurriedly quitted the room, leaving her somewhat puzzled to account for his variable moods.

The following day Captain Treherne called, and had an interview with Mr. Lorraine, which was not to his liking; and when he bade Mab good-bye he did not refer to the subject she so much dreaded—his love for her.



## CHAPTER V.

## LOVE'S ECHOES.

THE wintry breath of snow and frost had come upon the land in all its keen intensity, and sisters looked forward to enjoying many happy hours on the ice, which was now getting into prime condition.

Who among us does not enjoy rushing along through space in warm wraps which defy the biting wind, our frames aglow with health, our spirits exhilarated to a pitch that transforms winter into a season of delight and pleasure?

Down at Dinglewood Park—Mab's property when she came of age—quite a host of visitors had assembled—among them Ray and his gentle mother, both of whom soon became general favourites with everybody, with Mrs. Loraine especially; but Mab's guardian somehow did not like the fine young fellow, because he had not forgotten his mother's allusion to the portrait which hung in Mab's chamber, or the flush that had crimsoned her brow and face when she had heard the remark.

How is it that love makes us all so sensitive and keenly watchful of things which would escape the observation of ordinary persons, and that the most trivial circumstance arouses in our breast suspicions? It must be that while we are in the flesh love is not perfected, but is linked with jealousy, and lacks that divine perfectibility which assumes that "perfect love casteth out all fear."

Of course Raymond, in his ignorance of Mr. Loraine's heart, took up the position again towards Mab which she had granted him at the Chestnuts, and was very attentive to her as her engaged lover.

Mab felt uneasy, for her womanly perception became alive to the fact that her guardian was averse to her entering into any engagement without his knowledge; and she did not care to enlighten him as to her promise to become Ray's wife, and this secrecy was likely to lead to unpleasantness.

Innocent of any intention to wound her son, whose life for many years had been carefully hidden from her knowledge, Mrs. Loraine, who in conversing with Mab's aunt, had learnt of the tacit engagement which the young people had entered into, said to him one afternoon, as they sat together in the cosy library, where a cheerful fire dispensed genial warmth around,—

"Dear Harry, I have a piece of news which will somewhat astonish you. Our Mabel was secretly engaged to her cousin before she left the Chestnuts; that accounts for the portrait. What a sly little puss she was not to mention it to us? I think it is very right they should marry, for both have means, and have known each other from childhood."

His face was averted from her, for he was watching Mab and Ray through the window as they strolled through the park, evidently enjoying a most familiar *Moi à elle*, which displeased him; and when he heard his mother's words and grasped the fact that Mab had given her heart away, his face became grey with suppressed passion; and although it was winter he threw open the window to breathe more freely, full of the one bitter thought that she was lost to him for ever. But even in his unjust anger, conscience, that silent monitor whispered to him, "Why should you interfere? She has a right to please herself; and you are only her guardian, with a sacred trust committed to your care."

His mother wondered why he did not reply, and drew her chair nearer the fire to escape the frosty draught which chilled the blood in her veins.

"I beg your pardon, dear mother," he said. "It was very thoughtless of me to throw open the window"—this as he closed it softly. "I am surprised to learn what you have told me, for it shows that my ward has not yet learned to trust either of us."

"Oh, Harry, it is not that; but she is shy, and does not wish us to know of it yet, but she will be sure to ask your permission when

the proper time arrives, and do not forget they were children together, and that she shared his home, and his mother was very kind to her when you could not take charge of her. I like him very much; he is a frank, fearless, fine young fellow, just such a man as I would willingly give a daughter of mine to."

"I do not care, dear mother, to discuss the subject now, but will wait till Mabel thinks fit to mention her love affairs to me,"—how bitter and harsh his voice sounded even in his own ears! "She is not of an age yet to know her own mind; but if, on inquiry, I find he is eligible I shall not refuse my consent."

He left the room, and his mother over knitting sat and pondered, murmuring,—

"What has come to my poor boy; he is so stern even to me at times—so unlike his bright old self? I wonder if he loves the girl; but does not like to confess it lest people should say that he took advantage of his position to win the heiress for his wife! But there, that is absurd; he could select some one much higher in station and far wealthier than our sweet Mabel. I wish he would confide in me; unasked I would not even hint at such a thing for I dread his anger."

Poor mother! how little you knew that the son you loved had by one false step ruined his whole life, or that he was ashamed to pour his sorrows into your gentle breast, although his love for you amounts to reverence.

The days sped on their way, and the frost fiend had bound the earth with his hard breath, turning water into solid masses of ice fit for the use of man.

"Oh, how delightful!" said Mab, as she heard the head gardener say to Mr. Loraine, "It is quite safe now, sir; and me and my men have swept it until it is as smooth as a billiard board."

"We may venture on, then, guardy?" she asked, her lovely face beaming with pleasure, and dancing with delight at the prospect of enjoying the skating.

"Yes; but be careful, child, and do not venture near the spot where the staff and flag are placed; that means danger."

"Never fear, guardy; Raymond will take care of me. There now, are you satisfied?"

He averted his face that she should not see the frown that came into it at the mention of that name, and said, somewhat curtly,—

"Yes, I suppose I must!" and then walked towards a small pavilion which lay snugly ensconced in a thick clump of shrubs, which was situated at one end of the lake, and was elegantly furnished as a retiring-room, where the skaters could partake of refreshments.

Mrs. Loraine and Mab's aunt sat together at the low window, that they might look on at the sport whilst enjoying all the comforts of the cosy chamber in which a fire had been lighted.

Soon merry skaters were gliding along the ice, full of the animation of youth; their merry laughter finding an echo in the hearts of the two silver-haired dames, for whom such a sport was now impossible, but who enjoyed the scene, because it brought back vividly to their minds when they, too, had shared in such revels with those who had long since joined the ranks of the great majority.

Raymond and Mab chased each other in ever-closing circles, and then, arm-in-arm, they skimmed along like swallows over the gleaming surface, which shone like glass in the rays of the wintry sun.

Raymond stood, at last, somewhat tired, talking to a bevy of young girls; but Mab, still unwearied, disported herself to her heart's content, when a little girl, who was near the flag on the edge of the lake, let her India-rubber ball fall on the ice, along which it rolled merrily; and not dreaming of danger, because she knew not what the flag meant, she ran eagerly after it, amid quite a chorus of screams.

Mab, who was near, saw the child's peril, and, without a moment's hesitation, skated on the treacherous ice, which creaked and heaved under her light weight, and, seizing the little

girl, tried to regain the firmer ice; but before she could reach safety the glassy mass cracked, and, with a heroism all her own, she, exerting her whole strength, threw the child from her, but sank herself, and vanished amid the floating debris.

Loraine, who had seen the accident, immediately bounded from the pavilion with the speed of an antelope, and, diving beneath the broken fragments, groped his way to where she had sunk just as Raymond reached the spot, and followed his brave example.

How it came about that Loraine found her and brought her to the bank he never knew; but a great throb of joy was in his heart, because he held her half-insensible form in his arms, and, for the moment, she was all his own, and he murmured,—

"My darling, my precious love! Saved by me, thank Heaven!"

But a woman's wall smote upon his ear,—

"My son! my son! save him, for the love of Heaven!"

Then he heard his own mother's voice say,—

"Harry, Raymond Vincent is under the ice."

And a fierce joy possessed him, because now his unconquered rival would no longer stand in his way, but that bitter cry of agony still rang in his ears, and proved too strong for him to resist.

Although he did not wish to give up Mab to the care of another, yet his manly instincts overcame every other consideration, and, placing his dear burthen in the strong arms of one of the gentlemen, he again plunged into the chill waters, and succeeded in rescuing poor Ray, from whom every vestige of life had fled.

Luckily, amongst the visitors was a medical man, who, after the body had been conveyed to the house, exerted all his skill, and the resources of science to restoring animation, and succeeded, at last, almost against hope.

Loraine naturally became the hero of the hour, but he shrank away from his admirers, and shut himself in his chamber, because his emotions were such that he could not bear the thought of even his own mother seeing him.

When he was alone he threw himself on his knees and gave thanks to the Most High for Mab's safety, and for having been saved from the moral guilt of crime in not giving way to the temptation which had so fiercely assailed him, and to which he had nearly succumbed.

Pacing the narrow confines of his room, he murmured,—

"Would that I had saved them and perished myself, my aching heart would be now stilled for ever! I snatched one kiss from her lips, dastard that I was, and feel it now, burning into my very soul. And what a delicious joy came into my heart when I held my beautiful one—my Mabel—in my arms, and spoke to her of my secret, although she could not hear me; but—and the thought is madness—she loves another, and I have given him back to her and life. Oh! kind Heaven, be merciful, and take away my heart of flesh and give me one of stone, that cannot be touched by human passions."

Meanwhile Mabel, in her own little room, lay and tried to think that her memory was playing her a trick, for upon her brain there lay words which she thought she had heard when half-unconscious, she lay in her guardian's arms. "My darling! my precious love! saved by me, thank Heaven!" and it filled her with sweet pleasure, although it might be only an illusion, and hiding her blushing face in the pillow, tears of joy escaped from her eyes as she murmured,—

"He saved my life, and I belong to him. Oh! how I love him! but perhaps I am wrong. It may be a sin to think of him when I have promised to be Ray's wife. I wish I had a mother who could advise me what to do! I cannot tell aunts, and dare not mention my secret to his mother of all women. What is

to become of me? I cannot live without him!"

It was bitter for her to feel that in the heyday of her life, when roses should strew her path, there should be only thorns to stab and wound her; and she prayed to her Heavenly Father to take her into His keeping, and guide and protect her amidst the shoals and breakers of life; and then sweet, refreshing sleep closed her blue-veined lids. And when she awoke she felt refreshed, and, dressing hastily, came down and joined the guests, but her wandering eyes saw not her guardian neither Ray.

The grateful mother of the child she had saved so heroically, at the risk of her own life, thanked her with grateful tears for the service she had rendered her, and Mab found herself the centre of attraction and the cynosure of all eyes.

For the first time she learnt of Ray's accident, and it pained her to think that he had risked his life for hers at a time when her heart had been given to another; and instead of joy she felt a keen sense of sadness that she had been untrue to him, the companion of her childhood, whose smile had ever welcomed her, and whose mother had proved such a treasure-house of love and affection for the orphan she had taken into her home.

And her memory reverted to the time when, seated in the orchard among the branches of an apple tree, he had brought her the first intelligence of her guardian's coming, and then came the hours of parting in which Ray had spoken of his love, and passionately pleaded for hers in return, and she had promised to be his little wife.

But in a few short months this picture had been effaced by another, in which a grave, dark, handsome face had won its way into her innocent heart to the exclusion of everything else, until she lived only for it; and now he had given her back life which would be worthless unless shared with him.

What cared she for his years, which exceeded hers by more than half? He had become the idol of her young soul, and she loved him with all the intensity of her impressionable heart, which beat only for him.

The series of accidents cast a gloom over the party, which soon separated, leaving only Ray and his mother behind. Even they had not long to stay, for he was going abroad to India in the capacity of civil engineer; and when he said the last good-bye to his girl-love he was full of hope for the future, and never suspected that her love was not his.

"Heaven bless you, my darling!" were his last words, and they often recurred to her in years to come. "I know I am secure in your dear love, and some day I will return to claim you as my wife, after having fought and won the battle of life. Your guardian is one of the noblest of men, and I leave you cheerfully in his care, knowing that you will be safe."

"Yes," she thought, "safe from him, but not from my own inclinations."

When Ray had gone, and sailed over the salt seas, Lorraine watched Mab keenly from day to day to see if she fretted for him, and he wondered much why her smile was still as bright as before, and no tears came into her gentle eyes for the love that had left her, and might, perchance, never return.

Mrs. Lorraine had her suspicions aroused by both ward and guardian, that they were secretly in love with each other; and not knowing of any impediment to their happiness, she resolved to probe the girl's heart, so as to ascertain the truth, and if it was as she suspected, to advise them to defy the opinion of the world, and marry.

"It would be much better," she thought, "if they were to do that, instead of wearing out their hearts in one eternal longing for happiness."

And loving her son dearer than her own life, whose span was fast drawing to a close, she took the first opportunity of speaking discreetly to Mab; and being a woman of tact, did not rush at her subject, but began by re-

fering to Ray, saying, "My dear Mabel, have you heard from your cousin since he sailed?"

"Yes, dear Mrs. Lorraine, but only once. He wrote very cheerfully, and seemed to like the novelty of being aboard ship."

"Come here, dear child, and sit near me."

Mab obeyed, and brought a footstool, and sat with her sunny head resting on the old lady's knee, presenting a sweet picture of youth and age, each sweet, pure and innocent, and full of love, for one and the same man, namely, Lorraine.

"Are you going to scold me dear?" Mab asked, playfully.

"No! my darling! why should I? You are too good for anything but caresses," this as she laid her aged hand on the golden tresses lightly. "I want to see you happy. Do you really love your cousin? Pardon the question; but being a woman myself, I am quick to discern; and somehow, sweet innocent, I think, when you promised to be his wife, you were too young to understand what it meant."

"How clever you are! That was just what auntie told me; but dear Ray bothered me so that I said yes; but indeed I only love him as a sister might a brother. Was it wrong of me to promise?"

"No dear, not if you thought that love would come with years. But, tell me, have you seen anyone since you could really love? Do not answer unless you choose."

Mab nestled in her lap, and looking up half shyly into the sweet benign face that was bending over her with tender solicitude, said, as a tell-tale rosy blush stole into her cheeks,—

"Cannot you guess? You are so wise, and know everything. I cannot help loving him; everybody does that."

"Mab, do you mean my dear son, my noble boy?" she asked tremulously, for a great joy had come into her heart when the lovely girl half hinted her secret.

"Who else is worthy of being loved, dear?" said Mab, with such artless simplicity that the old lady smiled; "he is so kind and good to everybody. Am I wrong in feeling this love for him? It must be love, for I am sad when he is absent. And, oh! so glad when he is near me, and his voice sounds so sweet in my ears that I could listen to it for ever."

"There can be nothing wrong dear, in true love! But remember the disparity in your ages?"

"Oh!" and now she blushed furiously, "I do not want to be his wife, but would like him to be my guardian always. He would not think of marrying a simple girl like me, when so many ladies would like him for a husband."

The old lady laughed a low, silvery laugh at the naïveté displayed by this lovely creature; and patting her head fondly said, playfully,—

"We shall see what she shall see. Bide a wee, sweet little birdie, and perhaps this dream of your young life will be fulfilled. Now kiss me, and run away, for you have to practice your new song which he gave you."

Mab ran out of the room to hide her confusion which her confession had given rise to; but with all her heart felt joyous; for had not his mother bid her hope, and in her she had a faithful ally!

In the drawing-room the zephyrs of early spring rustled the curtains and toyed lovingly with the flowers which were so lavishly placed about the room.

Taking up a sheet of music, on the title-page of which he had written,—*To dear Mabel, with her guardian's affectionate wishes.*—LORRAINE, she kissed the spot, because his hand had rested there, murmuring,—

"My love—my noble Harry!" and then she blushed at her own temerity, feeling her inferiority, and his many noble qualities of heart and intellect.

Then seating herself she ran her fingers lightly over the keys and sang the song of his choice, her sweet soprano voice floating in waves of melody through the chamber and along the corridor.

After she had run through it once she said, half aloud,—

"He gave me this because of my parting with Ray; but the words, though beautiful, do not touch my heart as if he were leaving me for some distant shore. I would weep then, and refuse comfort."

Little did she dream that outside the door stood Lorraine, drinking in the sounds of her ever dear voice, and that he overheard her soliloquy, which revealed to him the state of her young heart; and clasping his forehead he thought,—

"Oh, Heaven, has it come to this—that the love I so covet is mine—that never can be claimed by me? I wish that she would hate me instead! I could bear it better—it would make me brave to try and forget her!"

In the bitterness of this discovery there came again the words and music of the song, and for a brief space he was happy as he listened to the touching poem—one of Moore's his favourite poet.

"Wilt thou say farewell, love,  
And from me part?  
My tears will tell, love,  
The anguish of my heart.  
I'll still be thine, and thou'lt be mine;  
I'll love thee though we sever.  
Oh, say, can I'er cease to sigh,  
Or cease to love?—oh, never!  
Wilt thou think of me, love,  
When thou art far away?  
Oh, I'll think of thee, love!  
Never, never stray!  
Let not other wiles, love,  
Thy ardent heart betray;  
Remember my smile, love,  
When I am far away."

He stole in noiselessly, and seating himself on a chair watched her with love's hunger in his eyes; and in spite of himself a deep sigh escaped from his over-burdened heart; and turning she saw his anguished face, and forgetting everything but that she loved him, and that he was sad, she flew to his side and said, tremulously,—

"Oh, guardy, what has happened? Are you ill?"

"No, child," and his voice shook under the strength of his deep emotion. "The words of the song touched me to the heart, Mabel, because I am about to leave England."

She staggered at the suddenness of the announcement, and clutched the back of a chair to save her from falling, her face as pale as a lily, her eyes laden with terror, as she gasped,—

"Oh, no; do not tell me that!"

"Mabel, what are you saying? Do you know what your words imply?" he asked, hoarsely.

"I only know that I cannot bear the thought of your leaving me. We have been so happy together."

"Oh, child, you know not my heart, or you would not say that! Every hour that I live in your society is torture to my soul!"

"Oh, how you must hate me, then!"

Rising he caught the fairy form in his strong clasp, and pressing her to his heart, showered down hot, burning kisses that scorched her with love's fire as he said,—

"Is that hate, and that, and that! Oh, Mabel, why—oh, why, did you make me love you to distraction, when I am—oh, Heaven, I cannot tell you the secret that I have carried about with me for years!"

She felt happy in his embrace, even though his words terrified her, and his kisses ran like fire through her quivering frame.

"Do you love me, then?" she asked, passionately; "and can you leave me to die—to wither like a poor flower thirsting for rain? Oh! no, that cannot be! Why should you go now that we know of each others' love, just as the cup of bliss is pressed to our lips? If you go I will go too, and will leave everything—everybody for your dear sake!"

"This is madness," he said, as he released her, and placed her in a seat; "in a moment of weakness I said words that should never have escaped my lips. Oh! Mabel, leave me; go while you are still safe, or I might be tempted beyond my strength. If you love me, think of my honour, and save me from myself."



"Why should you say such strange words to me?" she faltered. "One moment you speak of your love, and give me kisses, and the next you bid me leave you, as if I was hateful in your very sight. Is it because of Raymond? I do not love him, but only you."

"It is not that, Mabel; would to Heaven no greater barrier than he stood in our way!"

"Then it must be that before you saw me you plighted your love to someone else. Oh! do not keep me in suspense, let me know the worst; I am brave. See, my hand does not tremble, and my voice does not falter now."

"Oh! despicable coward that I am, to be shamed into the truth by a gentle girl like you. Let me recall my words, forget that they were ever spoken. Oh! do, for both our sakes, and let me pass out of your pure, young life like a black dream."

"Can love be so cruel? Oh! no, I cannot let the sweet assurance of your love be stricken down dead at my feet without knowing why it should die. Come, be brave, and tell me all; we may overcome every obstacle to our happiness. Did not I dare to love you when my vows had been plighted to another?"

He groaned in anguish of spirit, and sat with his head clasped in his hot, feverish hands, afraid to own himself the dastard he appeared in his own eyes.

Rising, she placed her small white hand on his shoulder, and her mere touch thrilled his very being.

"Come, tell me your secret; it will be sacred to me even were it murder itself. You do not know me, dear love, how I can suffer if needs be. Try me, and you will not find me wanting. Oh! speak to me; say anything rather than keep silent like this. See, I am at your side, ready to share your sorrow and to comfort you."

Raising his head, he said,—

"Mabel, I owe it to you to confess all," and, placing a chair for her, she seated herself close beside him, and clasped his hand to give him courage. "My own heart condemns me," he said, bitterly; "and, when you know all, even you will not excuse me. Listen, Mabel, to the sad story of my life. Years ago, when travelling abroad, I conceived a mad infatuation for a foreign, worthless woman, and, in a moment of weakness, I married her."

"Go on," she said, calmly, although she was fast losing control of her senses, for she had no idea that his confession would reveal anything like what she had listened to, but thought that, in a moment of anger, he had slain a man, and that the crime stood between his love and her.

"She still lives, oh! but not as my wife. She deserted me for another, and I am not able to get my heart high enough to publish my shame to the world, for my sweet mother's sake, who does not know my secret."

He had, whilst speaking, averted his face, lest he should read his condemnation in hers, and be thrust forth from the paradise which her love had created for him. But hearing no response, no word of reproach or comfort from her lips, he turned, and saw her white face and closed eyes, and, fearing that the shock had killed her, raised her in his arms and bore her to the library to his mother, saying, hoarsely,—

"Mother, I have killed her!"

And then, placing Mab's insensible form on a couch, he staggered, and fell heavily to the floor.

## CHAPTER VI. AND LAST.

For weeks Lorraine hovered betwixt life and death, fighting the black angel that had spread his sable pinions over him to snatch him away from this world and from Mab, who never left his side by night or day, but bravely nursed him through it all, and listened to his ravings, in which he implored her to forgive him and love him still.

She was being tried and purified in the furnace of affliction, and the pure gold of her nature came to the surface and gained for

her the deepest love and affection from his mother that ever one woman was capable of bestowing on another.

Mab had left the Chestnuts a mere child, and now, in a few months, she was transformed into a woman full of beautiful instincts, ready to suffer for the man she loved, although she knew that he was not free.

Then came the period of convalescence in the time of summer roses and sweet perfumes, when nature had decked herself with gems, and the sun shone brightly and the heavens were blue, and the earth teemed with the promise of a rich harvest of wine and corn to make glad the heart of man, and Dinglewood Park was in all its glory of summer array of green, and gold, and crimson, and blue, with the grass waving high, and the flocks and herds grazing in the meadows.

Lorraine and Mab were seated on the lawn in the crimson twilight, with the low twittering of birds sounding in their ears like echoes, and the musical tinkle of sheep bells wafted to them on the sweet air redolent of new-mown hay, and from a thicket came the nightingale's song, filling their hearts with a sense of peaceful rest and calm.

"And must we part, dear one?" he said, as he looked into her face with a sigh; "but why do I ask only to mock myself with delusions? Oh, that I were free! then my happiness would be complete; but now I am most miserable, and you, dear love, cannot remain near me. It would be wrong, and I dare not ask you to make any more sacrifices for my sake. You must try and forget me, and be Raymond's wife."

"That can never be," she said with gentle firmness. "It would be wrong to him, to you, to me. I dare not meet him at the altar to swear in the sight of Heaven to love, honour, and obey when my heart has been given to you. I will never marry."

"I have wasted your sweet life—I who love you with all the strength of my mature manhood! Oh, it is cruel! but I am helpless. I could not see my mother bow her head in shame, or blush in her old age for the honour of the Lorraines. She is gliding peacefully towards the valley of the shadow of death, and her mind would only become unsettled if I told her I had a wife living who had brought disgrace upon us all. Oh, my gentle love! how I fought and battled against the impulses of my heart for your dear sake; but love proved stronger than principle, and I was vanquished. I who thought myself for ever safe from love's power, and my vaunted strength in the hour of temptation proved weaker than a rope of sand. Oh, my darling! can you ever forgive me?"

"Yes, dear Harry, because I hungered for the love which you gave me; and although it has brought me a crown of thorns instead of roses, yet I would rather suffer than not have known that I had gained your love."

He looked at her with, oh! such a depth of love and passion in his eyes as if he longed to strain her to his heart and to say—"Come, let us fly to some distant shore and be happy in each other's love."

But he checked the impulse, for illness had purified and strengthened his moral nature, and purged his soul from the dross which had clogged it, and he could say nothing, but only sigh and clasp her little hand fondly.

There was a step on the gravel path, and turning he saw his aged mother, her silver hair dyed with the crimson hues of the setting sun, her face wearing a placid smile as she looked with all a mother's loving tenderness at her son and Mab, both of whom she looked upon as her children.

She held a letter in her hand, marked very important, and bearing a foreign postmark, and said,—

"Dear Harry, this came an hour ago, but I did not like to disturb you. And, dear Mab, come, dear child, suppose we take a stroll and leave him to read the letter."

Arm-in-arm they wandered over the mossy turf in the summer gloaming, whilst he opened

and read its contents; then a glad cry escaped his lips, and he exclaimed,—

"Mab my love, come to me, saved—free! Oh! come quickly to share my joy!"

She flew to him on the wings of love, and straining her to him, he whispered,—

"My wife that is to be, read the joyful news for yourself!"

And whilst she read, with his arm encircling her slim waist, and her golden head nestling against his shoulder, his mother watched them, and with clasped hands and tearful eyes thanked Heaven for the joy she could see radiating from their faces.

The letter enclosed a marriage certificate, proving that his faithless wife had committed bigamy in marrying him, and that, having returned to her first husband, she again played him false, and his revenge was to expose her to the eyes of the man upon whose bounty they had both been living.

Six months later it was Mab's wedding morn and the trees were just putting tender buds of promise; the birds were building their nests, and all nature began once more to teem with life and beauty. She was reading a letter from her aunt Vincent, who congratulated her on her choice, and commended her for her courage in being happy with the man she loved, instead of keeping her promise to Raymond, to whom she said she would write and break the news.

It was a quiet wedding, and love was its chief charm, for both bride and bridegroom had been sorely tried, and were now reaping the reward of their constancy.

Years of happiness were before them, and in due course a son and heir came to bless them, and to be spoiled by its doting grandmother.

Raymond had written to say in his usual style that he wouldn't break his heart, for there was as good fish in the sea as ever was caught, and promised when he returned to England to visit Mab and her husband; which promise he fulfilled with Kate, the vicar's daughter, who was now his wife.

Aunt Vincent was a constant visitor to Dinglewood Park, where she was always welcome; and said one day to her niece archly,—

"You little rogue, why you scoured both a husband and a guardian!"

And Lorraine standing by replied, tenderly,—

"Yes, I am still Mab's guardian!"

[THE END.]

No man is so foolish but he may give another good counsel sometimes; and no man is so wise but he may err if he will take no other's counsel but his own.

THE Shakers, who are still at Hordle, on the borders of the New Forest, are reported to have suffered considerably during the late storm, the canvas roofings of some of their tents being carried away by the wind. The community, which at one time numbered considerably over one hundred, has been reduced to a total rather below sixty, of whom some few are provided with sleeping accommodation in the village, though the bulk of the party both live and sleep in the tents.

TRANSATLANTIC millionaires sometimes furnish their houses with more extravagance than taste, judging from the *San Francisco News Letter's* account of a gorgeous home in Missouri. There the proprietor has an original method of displaying his works of art, for "suspended to the elaborate gas fixtures from the ceiling are long lines of figures in imitation of all the ancient statuary, and presenting a delightful series of pictures." Seen by a nervous person in the gloaming, by the way, the sculpture might suggest a collection of ancient galleys and their occupants. Bright colours reign in all the rooms, as one devoted to hothouse flowers has a brilliant green carpet to imitate nature, and another contains a hundred canaries, with a carpet as yellow as the birds. Huge mirrors are inserted in all the furniture.

## FACETTES.

My DEAR.—An expression used by man and wife at the commencement of a quarrel.

Why should a tailor make an unbiassed politician?—Because he goes in for both men and measures.

Prove it with a TAIL to it.—Where there's a will there's a way for the lawyers to make some money.

Which is the easiest of the three professions—law, physic, or divinity?—Divinity—because it is easier to preach than to practice.

"Sit down," said a handsomely-dressed, vivacious young lady at a fashionable watering-place; "sit down; it's about the only thing you can do here without paying for it."

Over 140,000 plants are known to botanists, and yet out of the lot the chemist can't make a mixture that will undo in ten minutes the work a hornet has done in two seconds.

"You are the most handsome lady I ever saw," said a gentleman to one of the fair. "I wish I could say as much for you," replied the lady. "You could, madame, if you paid as little regard to truth as I have."

A really picturesque hat on a really picturesque head is something to remember," says a fashion writer. Certainly it is, and so is a picturesque black eye over a badly swollen nose.

One day, on the steps of a club, the late H. S. Leigh was asked if there was inside a man with one eye named Walker. "Let's see, what's the name of his other eye?" Leigh inquired.

Doctor W.—"Mr. C—, what fits a spiral?" C—: "It is a circle, but every time it comes round it misses." Doctor W.—: "Something like you, then, as you generally miss."

"My dear, I can't find the cold whisel, and yet I placed it in this closet myself only yesterday." "Yes, a nice place that was to put it such weather as this, and close by the kitchen range, too. Why, it would not stay cold two minutes. It's down cellar in the refrigerator."

"Now, Edith," said her mother, "you are going to be a good girl to-day and act like a little lady, aren't you?" "Yes, mamma," replied Edith, adding after a few moments silent cogitation, "What makes you say 'little lady,' mamma? Is it cause big ladies act so awful?"

Two doctors are conferring together about a rich old gentleman, whose family, full of solicitude, wish to incooperate him. "There is no doubt," says one of them, "that his mind is not quite right. He is evidently a monomaniac." "In what way?" "He is a *malade imaginaire*. He has consulted every physician and doctor in Paris." The other doctor, who understands the interests of the faculty, regards his colleague severely, and says: "You call that being crazy? I think he could not be more rational. I suppose that you were going to speak to me of one of those harmful beings, of whom there are so many—an imaginary healthy man!"

Hunt is rather a good story which may serve to illustrate the influence of certain regulations upon the humorous fancy. An officer, who had failed to acquaint himself with the latest amended form of a previously amended regulation, recently submitted a claim for reimbursement of travelling expenses, in which the sum of sixpence was charged under the very ordinary head of "porter." The item was disallowed, and he was referred to the Regulation which prohibits any claim being preferred under like circumstances for refreshments. He stuck, however, to his item, and explained that the porter was not a fluid, but a man who, he assumed, was worthy of his hire.

The society belle is sometimes known by her chatter.

The best thing in print.—A pretty girl in a cotton dress.

Every time a doctor feels a man's pulse, his purse experiences a chill.

Why does a person, who is out of health, partly lose his sense of touch?—Because he doesn't feel well.

A hairdresser at the East-end has this startling announcement in his shop: "Ladies' shampoos made up and arranged."

A WHISPER.—Some malicious persons say that the letters "M.D." which are placed after physicians' names mean Money Down.

It is said that a pair of pretty eyes are the best mirror for a man to shave by. Exactly so; and it is unquestionably the case that many a man has been shaved by them.

Said a four-year-old, on being told the story of Little Red Riding Hood, "I don't see what the wolf wanted to eat up the little girl for. I should think the grandmother would have been enough for it. She would, if he was as large as mine!"

"What influence has the moon upon the tide?" the teacher asked Henry. "And Henry said it depended on what was tied; it was a dog it made him howl; and if it was a gate it untied it just as soon as a cow or a young man came along. It is such things as this that make the school-teachers want to lay down and die every day at four o'clock."

"How can I leave you, my darling?" murmured a lover, in tones of distressing tenderness, as he observed both hands of the clock approach a perpendicular on the dial. "Well, John," responded the girl, with wicked innocence, "you can take your choice. If you go through the hall you will be liable to wake up father, and if you leave by way of the back shed you'll be likely to wake up the dog!"

A lady not feeling as well as she liked, went to consult a physician. "Well," said the doctor, after looking at her tongue, feeling her pulse, and asking her sundry questions, "I should advise you—yes, I should advise you—ahem!—to get married!" "Are you single, doctor?" inquired the fair patient, with a significant, yet modest smile. "I am, my dear lady; but it is not etiquette, you know, for physicians to take the physic they prescribe."

There is a charming frankness, which would no doubt be properly appreciated by a modern Bill Sykes, or by any other enterprising crookman, in a notice that is printed on a card hanging near a huge safe in a store at Nantucket, Connecticut. It runs as follows:—"To Burglars. We sleep no money in this safe. This is for fire only. Our money is up at the house. Come up. We have four shot-guns, two rifles, three horse-pistols, and one revolver, all loaded, ready for use, and warranted to kill at ten rods. Time spent here is wasted. Verb. sap, etc." This genial appeal is accompanied by directions for opening the safe, so that if the burglar is not convinced of the truth of the statements on the card, he may, without having recourse to unnecessary violence, see and judge for himself.

THE REROT COVERTS.—The following story is going the round of the dinner-tables at country houses, and is too good to be lost, but as to names it must be a "riddling" matter for the reader. Mrs.—, a witty Irish lady of a distinguished family, being in the gallery of the House of Commons one of the last nights of the session, the seats were all occupied, when it came another Mrs.—, Mrs. No. 3, who, somewhat put out at finding no room, made herself very disagreeable, insisting upon ladies making place for her, in which operation Mrs.— dropped her parasol. Mrs. No. 2 picked it up and looked about for the owner. "That is mine," said Mrs.—. To which Mrs. G— in a sneering way replied, "Oh, with £50 in it, I suppose?" "No," said Mrs.—, with a wicked smile that smote, "it has been emptied by your husband."

Why is a shoe like a general servant?—Because it is made of awl work.

How to make a tall man short.—Rob him of his purse.

A HELIO hunter.—A fellow endeavouring to capture a widow.

Many women are spoken of as angels, and Mrs. Noah must have been an ark angel.

Women are the funniest when they say nothing; but women are so seldom funny.

Rose is the natural colour of a young baby, but afterward it becomes a yellow.

A RABY carriage is sometimes called a cry-cicle.

A STONY WATERS has finished a sketch called "Lifted Out of Himself." Probably the young lady went yachting and got sea-sick.

Man may want but little here below, but he makes a great disturbance if he doesn't get everything.

You can't always judge by outward appearance, remarked the fellow who took a drink of linseed oil from a gin bottle.

If the young pharmacist don't behave better, the young pharmacists will catch them and marry them.

A YOUNG lady calls her beau "Honey-suckle," because he is always hanging over the front railings.

MANY people lost in the Shannon, Doherty?

"No, sorr. Mike Smith was drowned on Thursday, to be sure, but we found him again on Saturday."

A MARRIAGE QUART.—Because you can lunch in a Pullman car, does it follow when you are partaking of a sandwich and a cup of coffee that you are in a state of Pullmanery consumption?

"I do wish you would come home earlier," said a woman to her husband; "I am afraid to stay alone. I always imagine there's somebody in the house, but when you come I know there ain't."

"Mr. brethren," said Swift, in a sermon, "there are three kinds of pride—of birth, of riches, and of talents. I shall not speak of the latter, none of you being liable to that apominable vice."

AN HEROIC RESOLVE.—Bector's Wife: "An' other actress to be married to a lord. It's simply shocking." "I'm afraid there's no help for it, Septimus; we shall have to bring up Evangelina for the stage!"

At an hotel in Glasgow, a gentleman finding that the person who had acted as waiter could not give him certain information which he wanted, put the question: "Do you belong to the establishment?" To which James replied: "No, sir. I belong to the Free Kirk."

A CAPITAL anecdote is told of a little fellow who, in turning over the leaves of a scrap-book, came across the well-known picture of some chickens just out of their shell. My companion examined the picture carefully, and then, with a grave, sagacious look at me, slowly remarked, "They came out 'cos they was afraid of being boiled."

"HALLOA!" ejaculated a guardian to his pretty niece, as he entered the parlour and saw her in the arms of a swain who had just popped the question and sealed it with a kiss, "what's the time of day now?" "I should think it was about half-past twelve," was the cool reply of the blushing damsel; "you see we are almost one."

IT WAS AUBURN.—"How do you like my new jersey?" said Mrs. Blim to her husband. "It is quite nice, dear, but when a woman has a head as red as yours—" "Tain't red, you mean thing, it's auburn!" interrupted Mrs. B. savagely. "Well, sweet, when a woman has a head as auburn as yours, she shouldn't get a Jersey of the same colour, for if she went out on the roof to hang out clothes, the neighbours might see her and turn in an alarm of fire, and—" Mr. Blim had occasion just at this time to go into another room.



## SOCIETY.

THE Duke and Duchess of Richmond and Gordon's guests at Gordon Castle included Lord Leconfield, Sir Adolphus Liddell, Colonel and Mrs. Welleley, Miss Craven, Mr. C. Craven, and Lord Carnegie. They spend their leisure time in the forest or on the banks of the Spey. The Earl of March went deer-stalking in Glenfiddoch Forest one day and brought down four stags. Lord Berkeley Paget brought down a stag in the same forest.

DUNROBIN CASTLE, the Highland home of the Duke of Sutherland, was the scene of a more than ordinarily interesting description the other week. The annual competitions, peculiar to the Scottish Highlands at this season of the year, were indulged in, and the neighbourhood of Dunrobin was gay with a martial display. To wit, the annual review of the Sutherland Highlanders, which handsome corps was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel the Marquis of Stafford, the other officers being Major Viscount Tarbat and Adjutant Webber Smith. Present to witness the interesting sight were the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Fitzhardinge, Sir Henry Green, Sir Arnold Kemball, Sir Edward Inglefield, Lord Rowton, and many others.

At St. Matthew's Church, Blackmoor, Petersfield, Hants, was celebrated, on the 3rd inst., the marriage of Mr. George Biddulph, youngest son of the late Mr. Michael Biddulph, of Lebury, Herefordshire, and the Lady Wilfreda Palmer, youngest daughter of the Lord Chancellor and the Countess of Selborne. The bride's beautiful dress was of cream satin, the back made à la Princesse, and the front draped with satin, with a long train. The pointed bodice was cut square at the neck, and trimmed with orange blossoms and point d'Alençon, of which the ruffles were also composed. Her hair was dressed à la Pompadour, with sprays of real orange flowers, and a tulle veil, which did not hide the face, was fastened to the hair with pearl stars and diamond brooches, her other jewels including a pearl necklace and diamond pendant. The bridesmaids wore dresses of cream spotted muslin and lace, the pointed bodices being laced at the back. The elder ladies had drawn cream ottoman silk bonnets, and the three children's hats to match, with high-pointed crowns. Each wore a jewelled arrow brooch, with the entwined initials of the bride and bridegroom.

Mr. MacGibbon states that under Mr. Leitch's instruction Her Majesty attained to great proficiency in painting. On one occasion a drawing by Her Majesty was lying in Leitch's studio when Stanfield called, and, seeing it, asked by whom it was painted. Mr. Leitch said it was by a pupil of his. "Oh! nonsense," Stanfield said. "Yes," said Mr. Leitch, "and it is by a lady." Stanfield looked at it again, and said, "Well, she paints too well for an amateur. She will be soon entering the ranks as a professional artist." All the members of the Royal family showed great artistic talent, and chief among them the Princess Alice. "After reading history with Madame Roland, their French governess, some of the children were accustomed to amuse themselves with making designs, usually in pen and ink, of scenes they had been reading about, and at this exercise the Princess Alice showed extraordinary talent, not only in the spirited character of the drawing, but in originality of design." A sketch by the Princess of the flight of Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin, which is engraved, evinces genuine artistic power. Mr. Leitch's last Royal pupil was the Princess of Wales, of whom he always spoke in terms of high admiration, and he continued to give lessons to her Royal Highness, at Marlborough House long after he had declined all other teaching.

## STATISTICS.

**STRONG DRINKS IN INDIA.**—By the last returns published, it appears that a great decrease has taken place in the consumption of strong drinks by the European soldiers in India, and that there is a corresponding spread of sobriety among the rank and file of the army there. In the year 1877-78 the total consumption of rum among British troops in India was 253,254 gallons, whereas in 1881-82 it fell to 149,801 gallons. Comparing the same year as regards beer-drinking the figures are, respectively, 76,942 and 74,747 hogsheads. Thus, it will be seen that though the consumption of rum has decreased, that of beer has not increased.

**TRADE UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.**—It appears that there are 24 trade union organisations in the United States, 16 of which publish newspapers for the dissemination of information concerning the trades they represent. The membership of these various organisations is as follows:—Amalgamated iron and steel workers, 42,000; coal miners, 36,000; cigar-makers, 18,000; shoemakers, 17,000; typographical union, 15,000; iron moulders, 14,000; locomotive engineers, 12,000; telegraph and line men, 12,000; bricklayers and stonemasons, 12,000; fitters, 11,000; carpenters, 6,700; railroad conductors, 7,000; glass workers, 7,000; lake seamen, 7,500; male spinners, 5,000; granite cutters, 6,800; boiler-makers, 4,200; upholsterers, 3,500; German telegraphers, 3,000; metal workers, 2,000; stationary engineers, 2,700; harness makers, 1,500; and horsehoes, 2,500—total, 247,600.

## GEMS.

THOUGH the presence of imaginary good cannot make us happy, the absence of it may make us miserable.

THE fruit of liberal education is not learning, but the capacity and desire to learn; not knowledge, but power.

RICHES are less wealth than is learning, for wisdom cannot be stolen or lost; it is therefore thy best friend.

IN giving, a man receives more than he gives, and the more in proportion to the worth of the thing given.

BIRTH, wealth, beauty, talents, may constitute eligibility for society, but to be distinguished in it persons must be admired for admirable and liked for agreeable qualities.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**PIE OF GOLD ROAST VEAL.**—Cut the veal in small pieces, and season them with pepper and salt. Make a nice paste, line a deep pie-dish, fill it half full of the meat, and on the top lay some oysters, with some lamps of butter. Cover the pie with the paste, and bake it.

**BREAD JELLY.**—Cut the crumb of a roll into thin slices, and toast them equally a pale brown; boil them gently in water enough to rather more than cover them, till a jelly is produced, which may be known by putting a little in a spoon to cool; strain it upon a piece of lemon-peel, and sweeten to taste; a little wine may be added. This is a light and pleasant repast for invalids.

**TO KEEP CHESTNUTS.**—To preserve chestnuts, in order to have them good and fresh, to eat through the winter, you must make them perfectly dry after they come out of their green husks; then put them into a box or barrel, mixed with and covered over by fine and dry sand, three gallons of sand to one gallon of chestnuts. If there be maggots in any of the chestnuts, they will come out of the chestnuts, and work up through the sand to get to the air; and thus you have your chestnuts sweet, sound, and fresh.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

A PROPOSAL has been made to build a new Mansion House on the unoccupied land on the Embankment, between the City of London Schools and the Inner Temple.

LONDON lights are never to go out. That is the latest novelty (not theatrical). The gas in the principal thoroughfares and open spaces is to be turned down almost to expiring point, but not quite out. Upon the turning on of the tap the illumination is instant. It seems rather a wasteful process.

MARIE ANTOINETTE'S harp has come to light, in an old curiosity shop in Berlin. Fleury, the Queen's valet, carried it off as a souvenir, but, being reduced to great poverty, he was forced to part with it, and sold it to a lady of Brunswick; after which it passed through various hands. The harp is richly inlaid with ivory, and still bears the name of the maker.

DURING the recent military festivities at Homburg, a monster concert was given by the bands of all the regiments in the town. The musicians numbered 1,012, and were under the direction of the chief bandmaster. After the performance of a variety of selections, a battle-scene in music and a monster *revue* were executed by all the drummers, and produced a grand effect.

At the Vienna Electric Exhibition the head electrician of our Post-office has been exciting a good deal of envy and admiration by wearing an electric scarf-pin, the only one of its kind to be seen there. These pins, which cost about a guinea each, are of intense brilliancy, and possess the apparently magic property of lighting up and going out at will, by means of the small accumulators worn in the waistcoat pocket, with which they are connected.

SOME one suggests that at the forthcoming Foresters' Exhibition some idea should be given of forest life in the olden times, and there should be representatives, as far as costume is concerned, of the workmen, guards, swineherds, archers, hunters, and foresters of those days. The idea is suited to the tastes of this dramatic age. The Ancient Order of Foresters, as seen at the Crystal Palace, might be begged to subside for a time, though they will, doubtless, not be restrained by any consideration from doing their share in the pantomime.

There has lately been a strong move in favour of connecting London and the Surrey side more intimately east of the Thames. The difficulty could of course be solved by a new bridge below London Bridge. But to this there has been so determined and well-founded an opposition that the scheme is certain not to be adopted. The obvious effect of it would be to make London, for the purposes of commerce, further from the sea. On the other hand, there is little doubt but that the agitation will lead to result, and the result will be the increase in the number of subways connecting both banks of the river.

**WOMAN OF FICTION.**—They are seldom satisfactory portraits, as a whole, be the artist man or woman. Dickens gave poor little Dora more love-taps than he did many a more admirable picture of femininity, but they were such strokes as a father would give to a spoiled child. There was in his line of treatment no suggestion of the man's disposition to express the man's preference for woman. Not many women have written with as utter forgetfulness of sex, or with as complete a subordination of sex to the artistic relentlessness of the situation as he did. As a rule, women-workers in fiction have given more attention to the characters and actions of men than to women. That is to say, their finest work has been on the portraits of men, and their tenderness and love-taps and unconscious demonstrations of sympathy have been for men. And because of this, women in fiction created by women have been no more satisfactory than those created by men.

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She tied her raven ringlets in;  
But not alone in the liken square  
Did she catch her lovely floating hair,  
For, tying her bonnet under her chin,  
She tied a young man's heart within.

And many a time that little chin  
He's heard from since, you bet and win!  
And bonnets she's had for her raven hair,  
And many a time he's been called a bear;  
And now she's throwing her ringlets back,  
And says she shall have a seal-skin sacque.

Buttoning the seal-skin up to her chin,  
She glideth out and she glideth in,  
And the eyes of women with envy are green;  
But the erst young fellow is seldom seen,  
For in a dark office he labours like sin,  
For the fairy who tied and roped him in.

ESSEN.—A very superior, but at the same time an expensive, quality of white rose perfume is made by mixing together the following ingredients: 2 drachms of oil of rose, 6 drops of oil of red cedar-wood, 4 drops of oil of patchouli, 4 drachms of oil of orange (fresh), 3 ounces each of extract of tuberose, orris, jasmine, and musk, 1 drachm of benzoic acid, and sufficient alcohol (to which has been added 4 ounces of rose-water) to make two quarts of the mixture. If these directions are followed closely, there will be no reason to complain of the result.

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R. S. T.—The gases formed by the explosion of gunpowder can all return to the solid or liquid form, through the ordinary processes of Nature. The two principal, carbonic acid or carbon dioxide and nitrogen, form a large part of plant food. Hydrogen, sulphuretted hydrogen and carbonic oxide, are often also formed. These by combination with the oxygen of the air, become either water, carbonic acid, or compounds which will unite readily with metals or carbonates to form solids. However, the volume of the atmosphere is so great, and the operations of nature in setting free and again taking up carbonic acid are on so enormous a scale, that even the daily burning by man of millions of tons of carbon, in the shape of coal, produces no appreciable change in the composition of the air.

B. M.—The original of the lines you quote occurs in a poem by George Withers, entitled "Mistress of Philareta," which was written in Cromwell's time, and in the antiquated style of that period. The writer says:

"Shall I, wasting in dispare,  
Dye because a woman's faire?  
Or make pale my cheeks with care  
Cause another's rose are?  
Be shee fairer than thee?  
Or the flow'ry meads in May,  
If she be not so to me,  
What care I how faire shee be?"

Sir Walter Raleigh expresses nearly the same idea in this way:

"If she undervalue me,  
What care I how fair she be?"

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## CONTENTS.

### SERIAL STORIES.

|                              | PAGE                |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| HELEN'S DILEMMA ... ..       | 25, 49, 73, 97      |
| PUT TO THE PROOF ... ..      | 33                  |
| THE LILY AND THE ROSE ... .. | 37, 57, 81, 105     |
| WILFUL, BUT LOVING ... ..    | 40                  |
| THE LOST STAR ... ..         | 43, 56, 68, 93, 103 |
| BROWN AS A BERRY ... ..      | 53, 78, 100         |

### NOVELETTES.

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| MARCHLAIN ... ..          | 29 |
| MARRIED BY MISTAKE ... .. | 61 |

### PAGE

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| ROSAMOND'S LOVE STORY ... .. | 85  |
| UNSTABLE AS WATER ... ..     | 109 |

### VARIETIES.

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| POETRY ... ..                    | 48, 72, 96, 100, 120 |
| FACILE ... ..                    | 46, 70, 94, 118      |
| SOCIETY ... ..                   | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| STATISTICS ... ..                | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| GEMS ... ..                      | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... ..       | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| MISCELLANEOUS ... ..             | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS ... .. | 48, 72, 96, 120      |

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N. T.—You did wrong in the first place, in engaging yourself to marry one for whom you had no real affection, and whom you must have deceived in regard to the state of your feelings towards her, but if you were strong and manly, having once made the engagement, you would not have allowed your affections to have become so interested in another direction as to have made it impossible for you to keep your promises. Now that the mischief is done, the best and most self-respecting course is to tell the lady, whom you have treated so badly, the exact truth, and it is probable that you will find that there will be no difficulty in breaking the engagement.

T. M. W.—Abstain from the use of tea and coffee, and everything else of an exciting nature. A boy of eighteen should not be troubled with nervousness. Perhaps you smoke cigarettes. If so, indulge in the injurious practice no more. Tobacco, in any form, is very hurtful to young persons. It is sure to impair their health in time. If your nervousness arises from some other cause, rise early, and take all the outdoor exercise you can. Be regular in all your habits. Wash yourself in cold water night and morning, and follow it up with rubbing the skin briskly with a tolerably coarse towel, until you get your body into a glow. The moderate use of dumb-bells might also help you.

R. S. T.—The gases formed by the explosion of gunpowder can all return to the solid or liquid form, through the ordinary processes of Nature. The two principal, carbonic acid or carbon dioxide and nitrogen, form a large part of plant food. Hydrogen, sulphuretted hydrogen and carbonic oxide, are often also formed. These by combination with the oxygen of the air, become either water, carbonic acid, or compounds which will unite readily with metals or carbonates to form solids. However, the volume of the atmosphere is so great, and the operations of nature in setting free and again taking up carbonic acid are on so enormous a scale, that even the daily burning by man of millions of tons of carbon, in the shape of coal, produces no appreciable change in the composition of the air.

B. M.—The original of the lines you quote occurs in a poem by George Wither, entitled "Mistress of Philarete," which was written in Cromwell's time, and in the antiquated style of that period. The writer says:

"Shall I, wasting in despair,  
Dye because a woman's fair?  
Or make pale my cheeks with care  
Cause another's roses are?  
Be shee fairer than the day,  
Or the flowry meads in May,  
If she be not so to me,  
What care I how fair she be?"

Sir Walter Raleigh expresses nearly the same idea in this way:

"If she undervalue me,  
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Of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

PART 250. VOL. XLI.

## CONTENTS.

### SERIAL STORIES.

|                              | PAGE                |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| HELEN'S DILEMMA ... ..       | 25, 49, 73, 97      |
| PUT TO THE PROOF ... ..      | 33                  |
| THE LILY AND THE ROSE ... .. | 37, 57, 81, 105     |
| WILFUL, BUT LOVING ... ..    | 40                  |
| THE LOST STAR ... ..         | 43, 56, 68, 93, 103 |
| BROWN AS A BERRY ... ..      | 53, 78, 100         |

### NOVELETTES.

|                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| MARCHLAYNE ... ..         | 29 |
| MARRIED BY MISTAKE ... .. | 61 |

### PAGE

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| ROSAMOND'S LOVE STORY ... .. | 85  |
| UNSTABLE AS WATER ... ..     | 109 |

### VARIETIES.

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| POETRY ... ..                    | 48, 72, 96, 100, 120 |
| FACETIE ... ..                   | 46, 70, 94, 118      |
| SOCIETY ... ..                   | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| STATISTICS ... ..                | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| GEMS ... ..                      | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... ..       | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| MISCELLANEOUS ... ..             | 47, 71, 95, 119      |
| NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS ... .. | 48, 72, 96, 120      |

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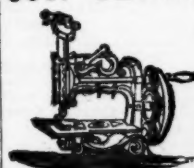
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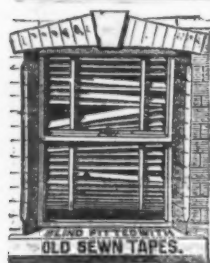
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PART 256. VOL. XLI.—II.

## CONTENTS.

### SERIAL STORIES.

|                             | PAGE       |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| REDEEMED BY FATE ... ..     | 608, 10    |
| HIDDEN FROM ALL EYES ... .. | 604, 4, 31 |
| NAMELESS... ..              | 601, 1, 33 |
| FOUND WANTING ... ..        | 25, 56     |
| HER GREAT MISTAKE ... ..    | 49         |
| MADE FOR EACH OTHER ... ..  | 53         |

### NOVELETTES.

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| MAB'S GUARDIAN ... ..        | 613 |
| LORD BERESFORD'S WILL ... .. | 13  |
| LADY VIOLET'S LOVERS ... ..  | 37  |
| LAURENCE'S LOVE ... ..       | 61  |

### SHORT TALES.

|                           | PAGE |
|---------------------------|------|
| SAYING "YES" ... ..       | 7    |
| BAINBRIDGE AND SON ... .. | 8    |

### VARIETIES.

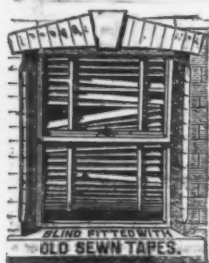
|                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| POETRY ... ..                    | 608, 624, 10, 24, 31, 48, 72 |
| FACETIE ... ..                   | 622, 22, 46, 70              |
| SOCIETY ... ..                   | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| STATISTICS ... ..                | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| GEMS ... ..                      | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... ..       | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| MISCELLANEOUS ... ..             | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS ... .. | 624, 24, 48, 72              |

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PART 256. VOL. XLI.—II.

## CONTENTS.

### SERIAL STORIES.

|                             | PAGE       |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| REDEEMED BY FATE ... ..     | 608, 10    |
| HIDDEN FROM ALL EYES ... .. | 604, 4, 31 |
| NAMELESS... ..              | 601, 1, 33 |
| FOUND WANTING ... ..        | 25, 56     |
| HER GREAT MISTAKE ... ..    | 49         |
| MADE FOR EACH OTHER ... ..  | 53         |

### NOVELETTES.

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| MAB'S GUARDIAN ... ..        | 613 |
| LORD BERESFORD'S WILL ... .. | 13  |
| LADY VIOLET'S LOVERS ... ..  | 37  |
| LAURENCE'S LOVE ... ..       | 61  |

### SHORT TALES.

|                           | PAGE |
|---------------------------|------|
| SAYING "YES" ... ..       | 7    |
| BAINBRIDGE AND SON ... .. | 8    |

### VARIETIES.

|                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| POETRY ... ..                    | 608, 624, 10, 24, 31, 48, 72 |
| FACETIE ... ..                   | 622, 23, 46, 70              |
| SOCIETY ... ..                   | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| STATISTICS ... ..                | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| GEMS ... ..                      | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... ..       | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| MISCELLANEOUS ... ..             | 623, 23, 47, 71              |
| NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS ... .. | 624, 24, 48, 72              |

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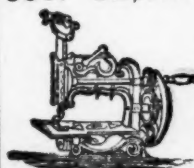
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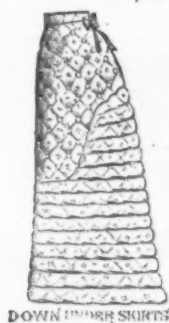
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